



Public Health Players in Oregon

State Health Authority: **Oregon Health Authority (OHA)**

34 local health departments (LHDs): **1** public health district and **33** county-based LHDs

State Association for City and County Health Officials: **Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials (CLHO)**

9 Federally-recognized Tribal Nations

Oregon Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB), under the Oregon Health Policy Board, oversaw RWJF-funded grant activities

Context of Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS) Public Health System Transformation

For many years, financial challenges have hindered governmental public health's ability to focus on prevention and wellness across the population. Disparities in county funding, which led to limited capacity for public health services in many areas, created inequities in services and protections available to Oregonians.

In 2013, the state legislature passed House Bill 2348, which created a task force to develop recommendations for a future public health system. In 2014, the Task Force published its recommendations in *Modernizing Oregon's Public Health System*, recommending that the governmental public health system, made up of state and local public health authorities (Oregon Health Authority [OHA] and Local Health Departments [LHDs]), implement the FPHS model as a set of services that no health department should be without.

In 2015, the state legislature adopted the Task Force's recommendations in House Bill 3100, which established the FPHS model in Oregon law. This law updated the composition of the Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB), mandated a public health modernization assessment and statewide plan, and required local public health modernization plans to be submitted by 2023.

Legislative Investment. The 2015–2017 legislative budget allocated \$500,000 to the state health authority for public health modernization assessment and planning. OHA and the 34 LHDs, with the Coalition of Local Health Officials (CLHO), worked together to develop the Public Health Modernization Manual; develop and implement the modernization assessment, and complete the ensuing Statewide Public Health Modernization Plan; develop a communications toolkit for local public health; and provide technical assistance to LHDs for completing the public health modernization assessment and using the communications toolkit.

In August 2017, the legislature signed House Bill 2310 into law. HB 2310 made minor changes to HB 3100, established accountability metrics for state and local public health to track progress, and added a tribal member or representative to PHAB. The legislature also included \$5 million in the OHA budget for the 2017–2019 biennium for public health modernization.

RWJF Project Objectives

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) provided grant funding and support through the 21st Century Learning Community to move these public health modernization efforts forward. Oregon's objectives through the RWJF project were to identify barriers to implementing FPHS and work with the state and local communities to develop a roadmap and tools to support moving forward with a new model for public health in Oregon.

What Happened

Oregon received \$249,144 in RWJF grant funding over two years. During the first year, the budget primarily supported staff time and ten regional outreach meetings. During the second year, the budget primarily supported staff time and the development of the Public Health Modernization Roadmap and website.

Public Health Modernization Assessment. In 2016, the OHA worked with a consultant to assess the degree to which all 34 LHDs and the OHA were providing FPHS and to estimate the costs of fully implementing FPHS. Results were published in the *Public Health Modernization Assessment Report*.

Regional Meetings across the State. In late 2016 through early 2017, CLHO convened ten regional “Aligning Innovative Models for Health Improvements” meetings across the state. These meetings brought over 400 leaders together from different sectors to discuss the future of the public health system and to explore potential regional FPHS implementation options.

Public Health Modernization Roadmap. In 2017 through early 2018, grant funds were used to develop a public health modernization roadmap to implementing FPHS: <https://orphroadmap.org>.

Public Health Accountability Metrics. In 2017, PHAB adopted accountability metrics to track progress toward public health modernization, and in March 2018, the baseline Public Health Accountability Metrics Report was published.

Cross-jurisdictional Delivery

The \$5 million legislative investment included \$3.9 million for **regional public health modernization grants**. These were competitive grants for LHDs to work with at least one other LHD and another partner (such as a Tribal Nation, university, Coordinated Care Organization, or healthcare organization) to implement regional communicable disease control strategies that seek to eliminate health disparities. In the end, 32 out of 34 LHDs, representing 95% of Oregonians, benefited from the regional investment.

Outcomes and Impacts of RWJF Grant Funded Work

- **Strengthened communications** across the state.
- **Improved community partnerships** and **increased the understanding of public health modernization** across sectors.
- **Improved readiness** to apply for regional state public health modernization grant.

Challenges Encountered

- **Lack of resources.** LHDs are struggling to provide basic public health services already, which leaves little room to prioritize system change.
- **Change management** and **change fatigue.**
- **Communicating the return on investment for FPHS** work to the community and legislature was difficult.
- Decision-makers and the public **prefer to fund programs, not systems.**

Lessons Learned

- **The Legislature impacts local efforts.**
- **Communication and messaging need to be tailored** for external and internal audiences.
- **The lack of resources in some LHDs was a barrier to implementation.** Without addressing baseline funding needs, it is difficult to start conversations about systems change.

Next Steps

State and local public health leaders in Oregon will continue to identify public health modernization tools and resources for the Public Health Modernization Roadmap, and continue to explore and implement other innovative service delivery models. Through the regional public health modernization grants, OHA and LHDs hope to demonstrate new systems and models for public health service delivery related to communicable disease control. CLHO has recruited more LHD representatives for the Communications Workgroup and will continue to meet monthly to share public health communications strategies.