

Howe David M

From: KOHN Melvin A
Sent: Tuesday, October 09, 2012 8:05 PM
To: PHD-Everyone
Subject: I'm proud to announce...

I'm very pleased to let you know about the release of the *Oregon State Health Profile* and the *Public Health Division's Strategic Plan*. I encourage you to become familiar with these documents, as they will be important guides for our work in the coming years. Both documents are available at healthoregon.org/about.

The *State Health Profile* paints a picture of where Oregon stands on important health indicators. We are proud Oregon ranks as the 14th healthiest state overall in the U.S., but as the *Profile* indicates we still have room for improvement in many areas, such as:

- Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in Oregon, killing more than 7,000 people each year.
- Oregon's rate of suicide has remained substantially higher than other states in the U.S. for more than 30 years, and has been creeping up.
- Diabetes rates have nearly doubled in the past 15 years.
- With no comprehensive state obesity prevention program, we are losing the war on overweight and obesity, with more than 60 percent of all Oregonians overweight or obese.
- We still rank among the lowest tier of states for access to fluoridated water
- We have the highest rate of kindergarteners in the country who go to school without all their needed vaccines.

These are all preventable problems if we can focus and build the political will to address them. The *Public Health Division's Strategic Plan* will help us do that, as it lays out a high level map for us to use as we help communities and policymakers across the state create environments that support and promote health and health equity for all Oregonians across the lifespan.

The *Strategic Plan* identifies 11 focal areas for the Division's work. While all of us will continue to work on issues outside of these areas I encourage you to think about how the work you do at the Division each day can contribute to moving the needle in these areas. Six of the focal areas are related to specific health issues:

- Tobacco
- Obesity
- Suicide
- Heart disease and stroke
- Family violence
- Community resilience after emergencies.

The remaining five focal areas are related to making our public health system a national model of excellence:

- Supporting the CCOs in achieving community health goals related to prevention
- Transforming the public health system through accreditation
- Increasing the use of health impact assessments
- Ensuring excellence in surveillance and epidemiology, and
- Establishing mechanisms that ensure that health considerations are included in all policy making.

I hope you will agree that this is bold and exciting agenda for us. Many of you have worked with us in a variety of ways over the past 10 months to create the *Profile* and the *Strategic Plan*, and I thank you for that good work. Now it's time to take the next step and implement our plan. Each of you has a role to play in that effort. I'm proud to have you on my team, and look forward to working with you to make Oregon one of the healthiest states in the U.S., and make our public health system a national model of excellence.