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# Wildfire Response Council Adaptation and Recovery Health Sub-Committee

*Governor's Wildfire Response Council  
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The logo for the Oregon Health Authority. The word "Oregon" is in a smaller, orange, serif font, positioned above the "H" in "Health". The word "Health" is in a large, blue, serif font. The word "Authority" is in a smaller, orange, serif font, positioned below the "Health" and underlined.

Oregon  
Health  
Authority

# Opportunity Revealed

- Prevention Perspective
  - Desire to increase the pace and scale of prescribed burns to help mitigate wildfire.
  - Communities are not prepared for more smoke during the prescribed burn season.
  - To increase the pace and scale of burning in the off season, communities need to be prepared. Preparing communities to mitigate smoke will require additional resources and attention, but can be manageable if we leverage what currently exists.

# Opportunity Revealed

- Response and Recovery Perspective
  - Wildfire is not a unique emergency, though it is nuanced. It will require similar state and local infrastructure needs as any natural disaster for a recovery effort.
  - To best protect the public's health, response and recovery efforts must build from and align with other state emergency preparedness and response efforts.

# Defining the issue

- Chronic health conditions and smoke exposure
  - Essence
  - ED Data (2019, SB 23)
  - Disease surveillance data
- Vulnerable populations
  - How are communities identifying, locating, tracking and supporting vulnerable populations?
    - CCO assessment, Schools, Nursing homes, low-income and houseless
  - What are their needs?
- Prescribed fire vs. Wildfire vs. Catastrophic
  - Evaluation and research needs
  - What has been done- what can research build from?

# Inventory of Current Systems

- State assessments and plans related to emergency preparedness and response
- Hospitals, EMS, Nursing Homes
- Local Government Assessment and Planning
  - Public Health and Emergency Preparedness Capability Assessment
  - Local Comprehensive Plans
  - Public Water systems
- Schools, universities/colleges, youth camps, social services

# Current Performance and Metrics

## Possible indicators

- Health outcomes
  - % of high risk members [e.g. *Coordinated Care Organization*] with air filtration systems
  - Emergency Room Utilization
- Community measures:
  - % of building stock in a community with cleaner air spaces
  - Transportation options to cleaner air spaces
  - Number of Air Quality Monitors in SSRA communities
  - Number of counties with Resiliency and Emergency Preparedness Plans addressing wildfire and other smoke events
- Long-term
  - Fewer poor air quality days due to wildfire smoke

# Recommendations: Federal

- Medicare reimbursement for transportation to cleaner air spaces during a smoke/fire event in a community.
- Medicare reimbursement for air purifiers
- Centers for Disease Control and Environmental Protection Agency alignment and funding support to states for prescribed burn and wildfire smoke evaluation and data collection.

# Recommendations: State

- Increase Air Quality Monitoring Systems in SSRAs
- Consider updates or investments to strengthen the Oregon Wildfire Response Protocol
- Review current contracts between state and local jurisdictions and consider where wildfire preparation and planning could be included.
- Health Evidence Review Commission considers directives for CCOs regarding Health Related Services or other medical expenditures to support vulnerable populations during a wildfire or other smoke event.

# Recommendations: Local

- All counties have a Public Information Officer (PIO) trained in the crisis communication cycle and readily available for wildfire communication to the community.
- Establish communication protocols between hospitals/local governments and health authorities.
- Ensure air purifiers (HEPA or Electro-static Precipitator (ESP) are available for homes.
- Provide public cleaner air spaces and transportation for vulnerable populations to access.

# Suggestions, Ideas...

- What didn't you see that you would like to see assessed and considered?
- Who is being left out?
- What are we forgetting?