

There are so many ways where we would like to expand public health modernization programming. It is exciting that life is starting to go back to normal and public health staff can get back to fully doing their regular programmatic work and with more in person interactions. In Deschutes County, early on we realized that Epidemiology was an area in which we were greatly lacking. Being able to collect and analyze data in order to make informed decisions about our community's health is critical. We also realized that providing communicable disease prevention to harder to reach and non-traditional organizations/groups was also missing. Serving the entire community means that everyone is entitled to the services and no one should be neglected. This initial work has recently been expanded by creating new positions that expand our capacity to meet growing needs in these two areas.

We are pleased to finally be able to perform work that targets conditions in our natural environmental that are ravaging Oregon. We are proud to now have a Climate and Health Coordinator that will help us target wildfires, wildfire smoke, excessive heat, drought and vector-borne communicable diseases. These problems are the new reality, and we must act now as there has been too much hesitation and ambivalence to these threats. Also, we are committed to performing all of our work with a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens. Expanded programmatic work in this area is necessary to ensure that our workforce reflects those that we serve and that even the most marginalized residents receive high-quality services. We are also looking forward to future Modernization Funding that will expand to Prevention programming in order to further expand our bandwidth in reducing substance use.

Lastly, we look to continue and build strong partnership with public health partners and organizations in Central Oregon. Working as a united front is the only way we can comprehensively address our larger, regional community. All of this work will take time to fully realize, but with the right foundation and collaborative spirit, anything is possible for Public Health!