

### **The Statewide Need:**

We have long known that the primary determinants of an individual's health status are lifestyle, environment, and genetics. Health care is only responsible for ten percent of an individual's overall health. Yet, approximately ninety percent of the national health budget is dedicated to health care. Meanwhile, individuals and families looking to embark upon the road to a healthier life face a myriad of social, economic, and environmental factors that reinforce their current behaviors. As a result, the United States continues to spend more on health care than any nation in the world but has among the worst health outcomes of any developed nation.

America's land grant universities have the knowledge and expertise needed to help address this issue. Through their county Extension offices, they have the community presence and local credibility needed to influence the social, economic, and environmental determinants of health. Evidence-based interventions, deployed in ways that are respectful of community norms, beliefs, and current practice can keep people healthy and delay or prevent the need for medical care.

Increased funding by the State of Oregon to the Oregon State University Extension Service will help it retool for the broadened work of health extension. Through this investment, the Extension Service will enhance its strong connection to the OSU College of Public Health and Human Sciences to deploy a network of regional health extension agents across the state of Oregon focused on addressing the social, economic, and environmental determinants of health.

### **Strategy**

Building upon the Extension Service's recent reorganization into twelve administrative regions, the College of Public Health and Human Science seeks to place a regional health Extension agent in each of the new Extension regions. These faculty members will be expected to facilitate a bidirectional flow of information and resources between Oregon's only accredited school of public health and the communities of Oregon, including their health departments, coordinated care organizations, AHECs, insurers, and health care providers. Additionally, they will also be able to lead community assessments that utilize innovative methodologies developed by OSU for surfacing contextual influences on health and wellness. They will also engage in community collaborations that will address the contextual influences on health and wellness.

As issues and community needs are identified, the regional health Extension faculty will engage campus-based faculty who possess unique knowledge and resources that can be brought to bear on local health issues in a manner that respects cultural norms. These resources can include graduate students and undergraduate interns preparing to become the next generation of public health and human service professionals. Campus-based faculty will assume short-term Extension assignments that provide relief from their campus duties for as long as their expertise is needed by the community. It is also anticipated that these regional Extension faculty can work with regional universities, community colleges, and the Oregon Open Campus system to facilitate the delivery of both credit and non-credit courses related to health and wellness.

**Desired Investment Levels:**

**Minimal** – Provide funding for three public health Extension professors of practice in locations where partnerships with business, industry, government, nonprofits, and education are sufficient to support a robust public health Extension initiative. These regions include Central Oregon, Mid-Columbia, and West Central. The amount needed to minimally support the development of public health Extension is **\$300,000 annual/\$600,000 biennial**.

**Modest** – Provide funding for a total of six public health Extension professors of practice in locations across Oregon. Among the six would be the three provided for through a minimal investment plus three located in Northeast, Southeast, and Southern Oregon. The amount needed to modestly support the development of public health Extension is **\$600,000 annual/\$1,200,000 biennial**.

**Desired** - Provide funding for a total of twelve public health Extension professors of practice in locations across Oregon. Among the twelve would be the six provided for through a modest investment plus six located in Upper Columbia, South Central, Southwest, Metro, Clackamas, and North Coast. The amount needed to support the development of public health Extension at the level desired is **\$1,200,000 annual/\$2,400,000 biennial**.