

# Protecting Oregon from Communicable Disease Threats

## Public health: a critical role in communicable disease protection

Oregon’s public health system protects people in Oregon from all kinds of diseases, such as:

- Emerging diseases such as Zika and Ebola
- Common deadly illnesses such as foodborne illness and flu and
- Outbreaks such as meningococcal disease and cryptosporidiosis

Oregon’s low vaccination rates make it challenging to protect the most vulnerable people from vaccine-preventable diseases.

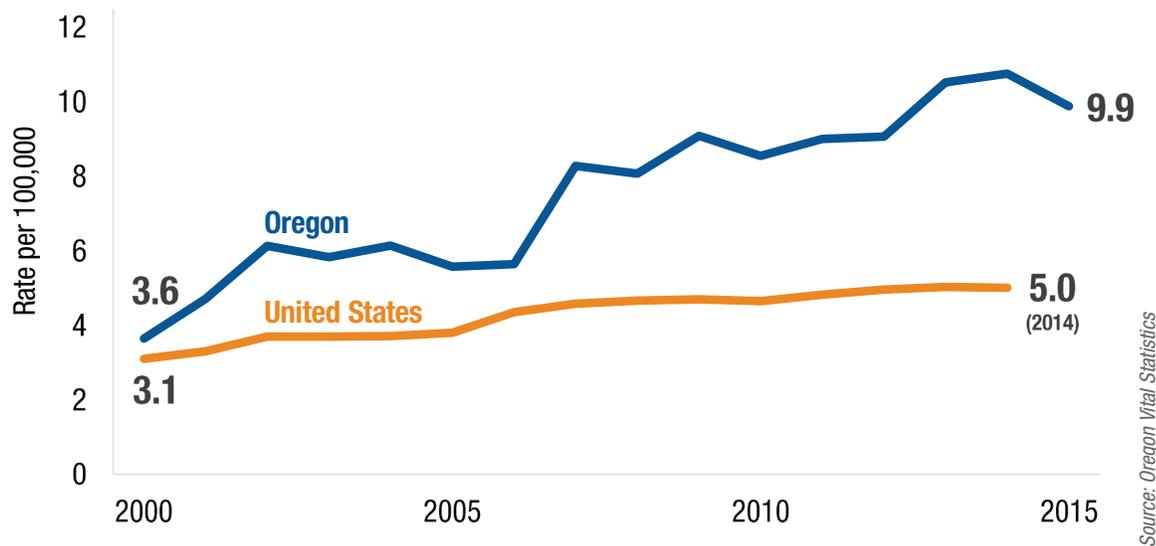
A modern public health system in Oregon protects every person from communicable disease threats.

## Gaps in protection

According to the [2016 Public Health Modernization Assessment](#), Oregon has not fully implemented communicable disease prevention. **One in four people in Oregon, or 1 million people, lives in an area that cannot fully identify, prevent and control a disease outbreak.**

### Hepatitis C deaths in Oregon and the United States, 2000–2015

Age-adjusted rate per 100,000 population



Oregon’s hepatitis C mortality rate is nearly twice the national average. There are currently no dedicated funds to identify, control and prevent hepatitis C in Oregon.

Oregon evaluated the health and economic benefits of modernizing Oregon's public health system. Initial findings show the economic burden from just a few of our health challenges far exceeds investing to modernize our public health system. For example, **foodborne illness sickens one in six people a year and costs Oregon \$229 million a year**. Modernizing Oregon's public health system will help us identify and prevent foodborne illness and significantly lower costs to our communities.

## Road ahead

A modernized public health system will help protect all Oregonians from communicable disease. The public health system will prioritize the biggest communicable disease threats identified in the State Health Improvement Plan.

Closing the public health system's gaps will ensure a healthy life is within reach for everyone in Oregon.

Learn more at [healthoregon.org/modernization](http://healthoregon.org/modernization) or [publichealth.policy@state.or.us](mailto:publichealth.policy@state.or.us).

## Communicable disease priorities in Oregon

- Improve immunization rates
- Protect the population from foodborne illnesses
- Prevent health care-associated infections
- Reduce the spread of sexually transmitted diseases
- Reduce the burden of hepatitis C

## Learning from Deschutes County: Increasing immunization 2013–2015

Deschutes County increased immunization rates in 2-year-olds from 64% to 78% between 2013 and 2015. They achieved success by:

- Partnering with local federally qualified health centers to get free vaccines for uninsured and vulnerable patients.
- Working with school-based health centers during school exclusion time. This ensures students get needed immunizations and can stay in school.
- Promoting other places such as pharmacies for immunization services.
- Consulting with clinics on strategies to increase immunization rates.

**Expanding a modernized health system across Oregon will protect people from vaccine-preventable diseases.**



PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION  
[healthoregon.org/modernization](http://healthoregon.org/modernization)

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