



# Public Health & Primary Care



**The health and wellness of our communities depend on a strong and effective partnership between public health and primary care.**

Both serve a distinct purpose, but they rely on each other.

Public health prevents disease and promotes health by creating environments, policies and systems that support wellness for everyone, such as access to healthy food, physical activity, immunizations, safe water and clean air. And even in the healthiest communities, people still need primary care to attend to their medical needs.

By understanding the importance of this link between public health and primary care—and by providing the support and resources they need to function effectively—we can assure that all people in Oregon live, work, play and learn in communities that support their health and quality of life.

For more information about the crucial partnership between public health and primary care in assuring community health and wellness, please contact:

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With growing concern about health in America, it's more important than ever to understand how public health and primary care constitute the backbone of our efforts to promote community health and wellness. Collaboration can prevent or lessen the incidence and severity of disease and injury, improve the health of our communities, and reduce the demand on our healthcare system.

OREGON HEALTH AUTHORITY



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THE BACKBONE OF  
**Community**  
Health and Wellness



## Public Health

## Primary Care

### THE BACKBONE OF Community Health and Wellness

Here are just a few of the many examples from across Oregon of how public health and primary care work together to create the backbone of healthy communities:

The Lane Coalition for Healthy Active Youth (LCHAY), a community health project of the Lane County Medical Society, addresses the public health concern of childhood obesity through partnerships. LCHAY successes include:

- Securing funding for a Safe Routes to School program in Eugene,
- Establishing a farmer's market in downtown Springfield,
- o Advocating for menu labeling at chain restaurants.

Benton County's Public Health Department assures community-based self-management programs are locally accessible by:

- Allowing county staff to use sick leave to participate in evidence-based chronic disease self-management programs such as Living Well with Chronic Conditions.

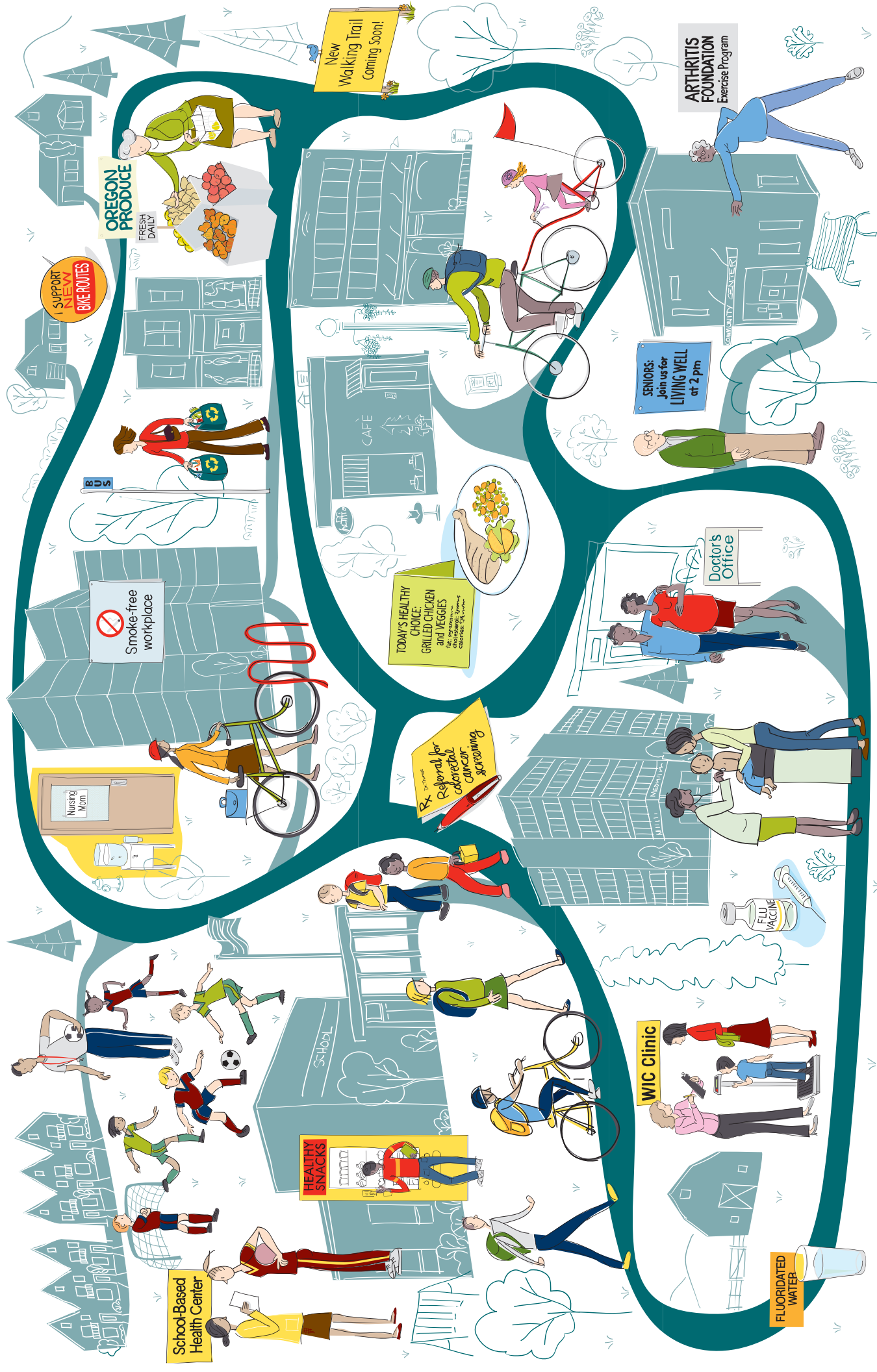
- Employing bilingual, bicultural health promotion staff called "health navigators" who work closely with primary care clinical staff to refer patients to evidence-based chronic disease self-management programs.

The Oregon Public Health Division makes data available to help inform the public, and to improve and monitor health. Data is most commonly shared through:

- Immunization registries,
- Publications and reports (i.e. "CD Summary"),
- Web based resources.

"As a doctor, it's hard for me to do my job without the support of a strong public health system. When I advise parents of a child with asthma to keep their child away from second-hand smoke, to eat well and get lots of exercise, I need to know they'll be able to find a smoke-free place to live, a convenient source of good fresh food, and a safe public place to play."

-Gary Plant, MD Madras Medical Group



"In public health we work to promote the health and safety of all Oregonians. But people will always need doctors to attend to their specific needs. We're two sides of the same coin, and you need both to really make a difference in people's lives and in the health and wellbeing of our communities and our state."

-Melvin Kohn, MD, MPH Public Health Director and State Health Officer,  
Oregon Public Health Division