

Budget from A1

behavioral health, K-12 education, broadband expansion, early learning and childcare, environmental justice, worker relief and workplace protection and wildfire recovery and preparedness.

One of the main discussion points during the Q&A portion of the press conference had to do with the budget's plan for health care. Under the proposal, Oregon faces a \$718 million budget gap for the Oregon Health Plan, something decried by the state's hospitals in a statement released Tuesday.

"The governor ... has chosen to propose direct cuts to hospitals in the midst of the biggest public health crisis in a century. Cuts of this magnitude could force hospitals to reduce services to Oregonians during a pandemic. These cuts cannot be justified," stated Becky Hultberg, president and CEO of the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems.

Hultberg continued, "Without additional emergency funds or a steep increase in net patient revenue, the financial situation of community hospitals in Oregon may become more precarious in the months ahead. If enacted, the governor's budget will exacerbate an already uncertain financial situation for many hospitals. Reductions of this magnitude are likely to cause hospitals to cut services, impacting access to care for vulnerable Oregonians."

While Brown's proposed budget seeks to establish cost savings, the governor explained some of her choices.

"I think it's so critically important during a global pandemic that every Oregonian have access to health

care," Brown said, later adding, "We have a shortfall in meeting the needs the funding needs of the Oregon Health Plan."

She said she would like the Oregon Health Plan to be funded to include all adults, as well as all children, which it currently covers; at present, the state provides insurance for 94 percent of adult Oregonians through the plan.

"I do think one of the challenges in putting together this budget is that I didn't know what level of federal aid, including FMAP (Federal Medical Assistance Percentage) match that we would be receiving," Brown said.

More concrete numbers will come with February 2021's revenue forecast. In addition, government staff, hospitals, care providers and labor advocates have begun conversations to address the health care budget gap.

"It's really a challenging time for our healthcare system," Brown continued. "I'm hoping over the next few months, we can come together and come up with a package that will sustain funding for the Oregon Health Plan and deliver our priorities of making sure that every Oregonian has access."

In education, the governor sought to fully fund Student Success Act programs, initiatives and grants, and fund the State School Fund at \$9.1 billion. The governor's budget stabilizes education funding by drawing \$215 million from the Education Stability Fund for public schools.

The proposed budget invests an additional \$65.9 million in housing and homelessness, \$20 million in homeowner assistance and \$250 million in affordable housing development funds. It requests help from Congress for \$350 million

in rent assistance.

Under COVID-19 pandemic response, the budget invests \$30 million in public health modernization, as well as other pandemic-related investments included throughout the budget.

The state will also apply for continued federal funds for pandemic response.

The budget emphasizes support for businesses and workers, both for the pandemic and the wildfires that swept across the state.

"A key priority of the governor's budget and policy agenda is to secure additional coronavirus relief funds from Congress, as current federal relief funds are set to expire on Dec. 31," the budget document stated. "The governor's budget also seeks to maintain funding for the Oregon Worker Relief Fund, Oregon Worker Quarantine Fund and the COVID-19 temporary paid leave program, to continue to support Oregon workers during this pandemic, regardless of immigration status."

Another discussion point from the press conference was the governor's intention to reform the state's criminal justice system. The budget document stated that the budget will include expanded police accountability measures, reformed courts and a stabilization of the Department of Corrections budget.

Part of this is her proposal to close three prisons in the next two years: Mill Creek Correctional Facility in Salem, Shutter Creek Correctional Institution in North Bend and Warner Creek Correctional Institution in Lakeview.

"My plan for the future of our prison system is that the

state will no longer invest in expensive buildings, but invest in the people — rehabilitation and, of course, ensuring that our communities can be safe upon their release," Brown said.

The governor said the Racial Justice Council is working to center the voices of Black, brown and tribal Oregonians in that work. She also said that the process to close the prisons would include helping current staff find new employment.

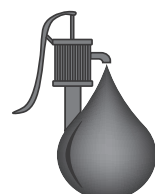
"I think it's fair to say that our communities of color, our tribal communities ... and our rural communities have been historically underserved. We make significant investments in these budgets to address these needs," said Brown.

Other highlights of the budget are: to increase access to broadband internet by \$118 million to reach schools without access; expand early care and education programs; protect seniors living in assisted living and nursing homes from COVID-19; and create an Office of Environmental Justice.

"This budget doesn't put enough money into our schools," she said. "It doesn't make the investment in public health we need. It's a budget built on sacrifice and hard choices. And while our state can deliver the core services that Oregonians expect us to, it doesn't go far enough to heal the pain of 2020. We need the federal government to stand up and respond to this moment of crisis ... A federal stimulus plan is critical to addressing the dire needs Oregon and other states face."

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Vision 2037
Vision Keepers

Committee Members Needed

The City is seeking applications for three open positions on the Vision Keepers Committee. The applicants are sought to service (2) two year terms and (1) one year term. Applicants will be interviewed and then confirmed by the Cottage Grove City Council. The role of the Vision Keepers is to monitor progress of the Cottage Grove 2037 Vision Action Plan, encourage implementation of actions, provide technical assistance or support where appropriate, produce annual progress reports, and recommend minor modifications to the plan as necessary. The Vision Keepers will hold quarterly team progress meetings, and will develop annual awards to recognize individuals and organizations for exceptional service toward promoting achievement of the Cottage Grove 2037 Action Plan. The deadline to apply for the Vision Keepers Committee is Friday December 11, 2020, at 5:00 PM. Applications can be obtained by visiting the City web site at: www.cottagegrove.org or email at: communitycoordinator@cottagegrove.org. For further information call the Community Service Department at 541-942-1185.



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