



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **Employment Department Announces New Director for Paid Family and Medical Leave Program**

**Oct. 27, 2021 (Salem, OR)** – Today the Oregon Employment Department announced the new director for its Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance (PFMLI) Program. Karen Humelbaugh, currently the director of the Office of Workforce Investments at the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission, will assume her new role on Monday, Nov. 1. With the pace of PFMLI’s implementation increasing, the status of the pandemic stabilizing, and several key leaders leaving, PFMLI is in a period of transition.

“Karen is the ideal person to provide stable, consistent leadership for PFMLI,” said David Gerstenfeld, acting director for the Employment Department. “We chose Karen for her proven track record managing numerous strategic initiatives and unravelling complex governance issues at all levels. She is dedicated to putting the customer first and ensuring equity and access to services for all people in Oregon, especially communities of color, rural communities and those affected by chronic and generational poverty.”

One of Humelbaugh’s first tasks as she takes on her new role will be to hire a permanent leadership team. Open recruitments for other leadership positions, such as the deputy director, are already underway, and Humelbaugh will play a major role in the final selection of the candidates.

“The opportunity to lead the PFMLI team and project is extremely exciting,” Humelbaugh said. “I’ve spent my entire career working with industry and worker advocates to work toward prosperity for all Oregonians. Paid leave is a critical safety net that creates an equal playing field for all working families while creating stability for businesses in their workforce.”

Humelbaugh brings a wealth of skills and experience that she will use to guide the PFMLI program. During her 24 years of experience within Oregon’s workforce system, she has worked as a tribal liaison, a dislocated worker specialist, and led multiple local and state partnerships and strategic planning efforts. Humelbaugh holds a B.S in Psychology from Western Oregon



University and a Certificate of Public Management from Willamette University's Atkinson Graduate School.

"Karen knows how to lead a team through organizational change while still completing project deadlines," said Gerstenfeld. "PFMLI has an important body of work ahead of it, and under her leadership, the program will remain on track to meet the statutory timelines."

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