



**Testimony Before the  
House Health Care regarding HB 4123  
Presented by Patricia Ahlen, MD  
on behalf of the Oregon Medical Association  
February 8, 2012**

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Patricia Ahlen and I am a member of the Community Health Committee of the Oregon Medical Association. I am a family physician, recently retired from practice in Springfield. I am here today to testify in support of HB 4123.

HB 4123 requires that the Oregon Health Authority create and maintain a list of designated high priority chemicals of concern that relate to children's health and are used in children's products. Over the past several decades, as commerce and manufacturing expanded, so did the use of tens of thousands of chemicals used in everyday products, including those marketed for children. With this expansion came research; a growing body of evidence shows that children and pregnant women are especially vulnerable to the effects of chemical substances in everyday products.

The OMA supports the creation of an OHA website that will monitor the potential exposure of toxic chemicals in children's products and allows public access to this information. We believe this is a step in the right direction towards full disclosure of product ingredients. In addition, the bill allows the OHA to participate in the Interstate Chemical Clearinghouse, an interstate association that provides high quality and authoritative chemicals data to states, organizations and the public to foster the development and use of safer chemicals and products.

The OMA has supported the Oregon legislative efforts to protect the public and particularly children, from harmful chemicals in consumer products, since 2008, when a resolution was passed by our Community Health Committee, which I chair. The OMA has supported previous legislation on Bisphenol-A (BPA), one of the chemicals that will be included on the high priority chemical priority list. Products that contain chemicals like BPA, even in small doses, are suspected of causing chronic disease, cancer, infertility and learning disabilities. The CDC has also found that children, whose growing brains and bodies are affected through adolescence by chemical exposure, have higher concentrations of toxic chemicals in their bloodstreams.

HB 4123 is more comprehensive approach than previous legislation, and we believe it is less onerous on the companies who manufacture and use these chemicals in Oregon products. Disclosing the inclusion of chemicals in various products – especially those intended for use by children – allows parents and consumers to make more informed choices about the products

they buy, and creates an incentive for competition among manufacturers to improve their practices.

We believe this legislation represents a sound approach to managing Oregon's efforts in this arena. Aligning with other states and building off work already done by the Department of Environmental Quality is a pragmatic and more efficient means of identifying chemicals of concern and has the potential to magnify the work in this arena we will undertake in the future.

I would like to thank you once again for the opportunity to address the committee regarding this very important topic and I'm happy to answer any questions.

**The Oregon Medical Association is an organization of over 7,500 physicians, physician assistants, and medical students organized to serve and support physicians in their efforts to improve the health of Oregonians. Additional information can be found at [www.theOMA.org](http://www.theOMA.org).**