



To: Senate Committee on Health Care and Human Services

From: Oregon State Pharmacy Association & Oregon Society of Health-System Pharmacists

Date: February 12, 2013

Re: Support of SB 167

The Oregon State Pharmacy Association and the Oregon Society of Health-System Pharmacists urge your **support** of **SB 167** which provides the Public Health Director with the authority to authorize pharmacists to administer vaccines to children 10 years of age or younger.

In 2009, the Legislature passed HB 3236, which allows pharmacists to administer vaccines and immunizations to persons 11 years of age or older. In 2011, the Legislature expanded the Practice Act granting pharmacists vaccine-prescribing authority so that they may administer immunizations to persons 11 years of age or older through the federal Vaccinations for Children program (VFC).

According to the Center For Disease Control, on average 24,000 Americans die each year of the flu. Though it appears that the worst of the flu season may be behind us, this legislation would enable the Public Health Department to better cope in the future with influenza epidemics by adding pharmacists to their arsenal of health care providers that can vaccinate younger children.

- Currently, pharmacists in Oregon can immunize children over the age of 11, and ages 10 and under with a prescription. In the case of an official outbreak or emergency, Senate Bill 167 will allow pharmacists to immunize children age 10 and younger without a prescription when specifically authorized to do so.
- Under the drug administration rule, a pharmacist can administer a vaccination to a child of any age with the appropriate prescription and protocol. Currently the Oregon Health Authority writes the immunization protocols for pharmacists and they are approved by the Immunization Program Medical Director. They are posted and updated regularly on the Immunization Program's webpage. However, the typical pharmacy-based immunization training only covers down to 3 years without additional training.
- In the event of an outbreak such as measles or influenza, unvaccinated children who are exposed to the virus should be vaccinated as quickly as possible. A natural disaster like an earthquake could mean injured children would need a tetanus shot right away. SB 167 will

allow pharmacies to assist in vaccinating the public to contain the outbreak or address an emergency.

- Currently, Oregon pharmacists do not have the authority to vaccinate children ages 10 and under without a prescription, which means a pharmacist would potentially immunize all members of a family except any child who was under 11 years old.
- The state of Washington has no age limits for pharmacists to immunize: it did not take them any time to get pharmacists on board for the 2013 Influenza Epidemic.
- Allowing pharmacists to administer vaccines to young children without a prescription during an outbreak or emergency may help to make the process more efficient for vulnerable populations. It may also decrease the surge of demand for medical services in an already strained medical system, allowing providers to focus on those who need care.
- Increased costs of the vaccines and the storage requirements associated with many of these vaccines have impacted the ability of some medical providers to administer vaccinations which has resulted in pharmacies playing an increased role in the administering of vaccinations.

The Oregon State Pharmacy Association and the Oregon Society of Health-System Pharmacists urge your **support** of **SB 167** as it will help make the process for administering vaccinations in emergencies more efficient.