



## **MEMORANDUM**

To: Sen. Laurie Monnes Anderson, Chair, Senate Health and Human Services Committee  
Sen. Jeff Kruse, Co-Chair, Senate Health and Human Services Committee  
Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee

From: Dr. James K. Lacey, OMA Legislative Committee Chair

Date: February 19, 2013

Re: Support of SB 132- Immunization Education

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Oregon's non-medical immunization exemption rate for kindergartners is the worst in the U.S. and has more than doubled in the last decade. The decrease in the number of children vaccinated against diseases like measles and pertussis is directly correlated to an increase in the number of cases of those conditions in Oregon. In 2012, over 800 cases of pertussis were documented, the highest rate seen in Oregon since the 1950s.

Immunizations are an effective way to keep our children, families and communities safe and healthy. When "herd immunity" is achieved and approximately 94 percent of all school-age children are immunized, lower rates of measles, pertussis and other vaccine-preventable disease is seen and children who cannot be immunized due to age or medical conditions are protected from preventable diseases.

The OMA supports SB 132 as this bill will ensure parents receive credible, medically-based information about immunizations and vaccine-preventable diseases without limiting existing Oregon non-medical exemptions for immunizations. As a practicing pediatrician whose time is often limited with parents, I also support increasing education to parents from the provider on the risks of not immunizing their child. The legislation requires either a provider's signature or a certificate verifying the parent received the education and allows the health care provider to either have the conversation directly with the parent or refer them to the appropriate venue to attend the certified training.

I believe that this legislation can reverse Oregon's immunizations rate and better protect all children from diseases that can be prevented. Similar legislation passed in Washington in 2011, resulted in a 25% decrease in non-medical immunization exemptions. Given Oregon's deplorable rates and the results in Washington, I believe that this legislation could have a positive impact on our children, families and communities across the state.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this bill.