



ALEX CUYLER *AC*

Intergovernmental Relations Manager  
Alex.Cuyler@co.lane.or.us

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DATE: February 19, 2013  
TO: Health Care and Human Services Committee  
RE: SB 132, relating to immunization of school children

**Chair Monnes-Anderson and Committee Members:**

The Lane County Board of Commissioners is in support of SB 132. The Board asks that the Committee schedule this bill for a work session and move it to the floor with a DO PASS recommendation.

During the lead up to the 2013 Legislature, the Lane County Board of Commissioners adopted a suite of issues that outline the county's highest priorities for the session. At that time SB 132 was known as LC 982, and it became one of the county's priorities. It was among a handful of concepts that we shared with our local delegation during pre-session meetings.

Weighing in their decision making on this measure was the responsibility Lane County accepts as the local Public Health Authority. It submits an annual comprehensive plan to the Oregon Health Authority to assure activities necessary for the preservation of health or prevention of disease by carrying out five basic services contained in statute and rule (ORS 431.416). Notably, the first two of the five are "epidemiology and control of preventable diseases and disorders", and "parent and child health", with both touching on the role that immunizations play in maintaining the health of Lane County.

Lane County's annual plan speaks to the rising rate of Religious Exemptions from required school immunizations in Lane County, and the high rate of exemptions amongst kindergarten children (8.4%). For the first time, this year the state's IIS Alert Immunization Registry breaks down the exemption by vaccine antigen as well as by individual school. The Plan speaks to the County's efforts to combat "vaccination hesitancy" amongst parents, and Lane County's lower-than-state-level rate of immunizations of 24-35 month olds (70% compared with 73%).

**The Committee should be aware that Lane County Public Health serves 1% of this age population while the private medical community provides the rest of the immunizations.**

SB 132 requires that all parents participate in an education based process prior to gaining the status of religious exemption. It is simply good public policy to take steps that will improve Oregon's ability to remain healthy and productive as a society. A similar effort has proven to work well in Washington, and Oregon should follow suit by ultimately putting the language contained in SB 132 into law.