

**Providence Health & Services**  
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February 18, 2015

The Honorable Monnes Anderson  
Chair, Senate Committee on Health Care  
State Capitol  
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Senate Bill 442, Vaccination exemptions

Dear Senator Monnes Anderson and members of the committee:

Providence Health & Services supports efforts by the Oregon legislature to address growing public health concerns related to childhood vaccination. Oregon has one of the lowest rates of vaccination in the country; for this reason the importance of protecting children and the broader community cannot be overstated. We ask you to join in support of Senate Bill 442.

Over the past nine years our state, in collaboration with a broad group of stakeholders and advocates, has invested immense resources into achieving the triple aim objectives. While much of that work has revolved around new care models and innovative partnerships to increase affordability and improve access to care, at the core is our commitment to providing preventative care, based on sound clinical evidence. The medical evidence in this case is clear - harm to children, families and communities occurs primarily when vaccinations are delayed or avoided all together.

In addition to the direct individual health benefits vaccinations provide, Providence believes that they are also part of our mutual responsibility to care for one another. This tradition is fundamental to religious and spiritual teaching and a cornerstone of our Mission to care for the poor and vulnerable – in this circumstance that would include young infants and individuals with rare medical conditions who cannot receive vaccinations.

As proposed SB 442 takes an important step towards ensuring that parents know the risks their children face if they go unvaccinated. While Providence supports this objective, we are concerned behavior will not change at the pace needed to protect our communities. It is our understanding that amendments are coming forward to eliminate religious and philosophical exemptions, and require the Oregon Health Authority to develop a statewide standard around what constitutes a medical exemption. We fully support these amendments and encourage their adoption by the committee.

Providence appreciates your consideration and the opportunity to provide input on SB 442.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Koekkoek", written over a white background.

Doug Koekkoek, M.D.  
Chief Executive, Providence Medical Group and Clinical Services  
Providence Health & Services - Oregon