



Legacy Health
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Re: Senate Bill 914 – Immunizations

Chair Monnes Anderson and members of the committee; I am grateful for the chance to speak with you today. I am Bryan Goodin, Manager of Employee Health at Legacy Health. I hold a Master's in public health and specialize in infectious diseases and occupational safety. I have previous experience as Coordinator in the Oregon Health Authority Immunization Program.

I am here today to testify in opposition to SB 914 on behalf of Oregon's 62 hospitals, health systems, the patients they serve, and the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems.

Hospitals and health care workers have a responsibility to avoid causing harm. Immunizations are rooted in scientific evidence, promote patient safety, and extend protection to vulnerable populations such as children, older adults, and persons with weakened immune systems.

Health care worker immunizations include: measles, mumps, rubella, varicella, pertussis, meningitis, influenza, and hepatitis B. These contagious infections are known to cause death, birth defects, or other avoidable outcomes in the high-acuity patients we serve. They also put staff at risk of spreading infections to their families and create a financial burden on employers if workers become ill.

The diseases prevented by immunization are still very real in our state. This winter Oregon endured a tough influenza season, setting a new record for number of hospitalizations caused by the virus. Many hospitals across the state were at capacity; some also experienced staffing shortages due to sick calls. Beyond influenza, the pacific NW states are currently experiencing more than twice the national rate of whooping cough. This infection is caused by bacteria which can be transmitted by adults, without symptoms, to infants at risk of severe outcomes.

SB 914 would prevent hospitals from collecting important data and from meeting national and international standards. Immunity status information is used to protect our patients, employees, and communities. This Bill would prohibit tracking of immunity status for virulent pathogens and delay our urgent disease exposure responses, risking spread of infection. Additionally, hospitals are required to report influenza vaccination rates of their staff to the Center for Medicare Services as part of our national patient safety metrics. SB 914 would restrict hospitals from meeting this annual requirement.

Oregon cannot afford another record flu season, whooping cough death, or meningitis outbreak. SB 914 puts Oregon hospitals and communities at risk.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any questions.

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