

DATE February 23 2019

TO Oregon State Legislature, Senate Committee on Health Care

Re: Support for HB 3063

Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

I am Dr. Ryan Hassan MD MPH, a pediatrician working at Oregon Pediatrics in Happy Valley, writing to urge your support of HB 3063, which seeks to remove the non-medical vaccine exemption from Oregon law.

The measles outbreak that started in an unvaccinated community in Clark County this January has so far led to over 60 children contracting the disease, almost 90% of whom are known to be unvaccinated, with most of the remaining having unverified vaccination status. As of this writing, 2 children whose parents vaccinated their children with the first dose of the MMR vaccine have also contracted the disease.

Children who have measles are at risk for potentially fatal complications such as pneumonia and encephalitis (infection of the brain). Even after they recover, these children will be at greater risk for infections for up to the next two years, due to the immune amnesia caused by the measles virus infecting the body's immune cells. Children under twelve months old who have been infected will be at risk for a condition called Subacute Sclerosing Panencephalitis. This is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that we cannot detect or prevent, that sometimes develops a decade or more after measles infection in infants, for which there is no cure. It is universally fatal.

If passed into law, HB3063 would require every child to be fully immunized prior to attending school in Oregon, unless there is a valid medical reason, such as being severely immunocompromised, that would render the vaccine potentially dangerous or ineffective. We know from experience that this kind of legislation will significantly increase childhood vaccination rates in the state, and reduce the risk that an unvaccinated child who contracts a vaccine-preventable disease will be able to spread that disease to others.

In my practice, I see many parents who choose not to protect their children with vaccines. They are usually intelligent, loving parents, guilty only of being conned by charlatans like Andrew Wakefield who prey on parental fears for profit. I do my best to address these fears with empathy and compassion and help parents make informed decisions about vaccinations. Despite my best efforts, though, many are still deceived by anti-vaccine propaganda. With this legislation, you have a chance to ensure that that propaganda is no longer allowed to endanger the children in our community who either cannot receive the vaccine or did not generate adequate immunity to the disease from the vaccine (1-15% of those vaccinated, depending on the vaccine). HB 3063 will help keep our children safe from unnecessary disease,

hospitalization, and possibly death, and save hundreds of thousands of state tax dollars that will otherwise be wasted on treating preventable-diseases.

Vaccines are the most well-studied, safe, effective, cost-saving, and life-saving medical treatment that mankind has ever created. Things that are more likely to seriously harm children than vaccines include: Tylenol, antibiotics, "health supplements", gun injuries, car injuries, drowning, getting struck by lightning, eating processed foods, excess screen time, and, of course, living in a community with low vaccination rates.