

2/26/19

TO

Oregon State Legislature, Senate Committee on Health Care

Re:

Support for HB 3063

Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

I am Michael Mazzotta, MD, from Broadway Medical Clinic, in Portland Oregon, writing to urge your support of HB 3063, which seeks to remove the non-medical vaccine exemption from Oregon law.

Families and medical providers are currently seeing the effects of under immunized citizens right now in Oregon and Southwest Washington. The current measles outbreak has brought to the forefront the effects lax immunization standards in our community and state.

This outbreak was preventable. Those who opt out of vaccinating their children do place other vulnerable members of the population, including infants, elderly and those with compromised immune systems, at greater risk for exposure.

Everyone knows people at risk such as a new baby or grandparent in the family, a loved one with asthma or COPD, a person undergoing treatment for cancer, etc. I care for many infants who are too young to be vaccinated against measles. Their families are currently at a high level of anxiety and stress due to the possibility of catching measles. One of my families has a preschool aged child who had a liver transplant as an infant and they are unable to get this child their live vaccines due to ongoing need for immune suppressing medications.

Measles has made it more in the news but this has been an ongoing problem for years. Even the influenza vaccine is under utilized and saves lives. Through my medical training and career and also experiences elsewhere I have seen the effects of preventable illnesses. A parent of one of the children in our practice had polio. My mother worked at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing that had many students who acquired deafness and or mental retardation from preventable illnesses.

Please remember, vaccines save lives, prevent chronic illness, life long disability. Vaccines are among the safest interventions or treatments we can offer our patients. The science behind vaccines is clear and the evidence is robust for efficacy and safety.

Physicians and politicians both have a duty to fight for the health and wellbeing of the people they serve. As a board certified pediatrician and internist, I feel that it is even more our duty to protect dependent individuals placed at risk by negligent decisions of others. Young under immunized children definitely are unable to advocate for themselves and are the ones that suffer the immediate and life long consequences when their parents make poor decisions. If you feel that there should be child car safety and consumer safety laws to protect them, then you should definitely support stronger vaccine laws. Please help us fight for a healthy future for Oregon and support HB 3063.

Sincerely,

Michael Mazzotta, MD

Board Certified Pediatrician and Internist

Broadway Medical Clinic

Portland, Oregon