



February 28, 2019

To: Oregon House Committee on Health Care

From: Dawn Nolt, MD MPH
Oregon Health & Science University
Oregon Pediatric Society

Testimony in Support of House Bill 3063

Madam Chair and committee members,

For the record, my name is Dr. Dawn Nolt. I'm testifying on behalf of the Oregon Pediatric Society and OHSU. The Oregon Pediatric Society (OPS) is the state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Our members are committed to improving the health and well-being of all children. OHSU, the only academic health center in Oregon, is dedicated to advancing health sciences through education, research and patient care.

OPS and OHSU are in strong SUPPORT of House Bill 3063, which eliminates non-medical exemptions from school immunization law.

I would like to share two stories which occurred in the past 2 weeks:

A 6-month-old infant is seen at the pediatrician's office. His mother has been afraid to take him anywhere for fear of coming in contact with measles. She was even reluctant to bring him to the doctor's office because someone in the waiting room may be contagious. She asks – in addition to vaccinating her own son, what can be done?

A 7-day-old healthy baby girl is being seen for routine care and did get exposed to measles in the doctor's waiting room. The family is now quarantined at home and

isolated from society for the next 3 weeks. The parents ask – how can other babies be protected from measles?

Over the past 2 months, I received innumerable questions on how to protect children who are undergoing treatment for cancer, bone marrow transplant, Crohn’s disease, and the like. My answer is the same – make sure that as many individuals as possible, around these medically fragile children, are vaccinated.

Robust scientific knowledge and broad medical consensus make two points clear:

Vaccines are safe

- Safety is tested in thousands of volunteers before the vaccine is used in the general public. For vaccines licensed since 2000, the average number of subjects tested is 11,000, and was upwards of 50,000.
- Vaccine safety is actively monitored by the CDC and FDA.
- Vaccines do not cause autism nor lead to chronic illnesses.

Vaccines are effective

- Measles, polio, and other infections plummeted in areas where vaccines are widely used.
- Studies need to demonstrate clear evidence that the vaccine works against the targeted infection, otherwise the vaccine is not brought to the general public.
- Serious and sometimes fatal disease can occur if a child is not vaccinated.
- When vaccinations decline in a given area, it becomes ground zero for resurgence of “eliminated” diseases, such as measles.

I have been in practice for over 15 years, and have a special expertise in infections in immunocompromised children. I have a master’s degree in public health, serve as my hospital’s medical director of infection prevention, and am part of an elite national committee of pediatric infectious diseases at the American Academy of Pediatrics. I and my medical colleagues attest that vaccines are safe and effective.

Vaccinations protect the patient who is immunized, and benefits the health of the overall community. When vaccine rates fall, the strength of our community immunity is jeopardized. This increases the risk of infection for everyone, and in particular for our medically fragile citizens.

The stories I shared regarding the 7-day-old baby girl and the 6-month-old little boy highlight the fact that a low community immunity increases not only the risk, but also the fear of infection. Families of medically fragile children have a justifiable and poignant fear, because their children cannot be immunized and hence are extremely vulnerable to serious infection.

Vaccines are safe. Vaccines are effective. OPS and OHSU are strong advocates for children's health. Removal of non-medical exemptions will ensure the health of all children in Oregon.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak in SUPPORT of House Bill 3063. I'm happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dawn L. Nolt". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "Respectfully submitted,".

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