

February 28, 2019

The Honorable Andrea Salinas Chair, House Committee on Health Care
900 Court St. NE
Salem OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 3063

Dear Chair Salinas and members of the House Committee on Health Care,

My name is Dr. Cynthia McPhee. I am a practicing pediatrician with Kaiser Permanente Northwest. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of House Bill 3063 on behalf of Kaiser Permanente.

Kaiser Permanente is an integrated health system. Our mission is to provide high-quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve. That's why we believe so strongly in the need to remove non-medical vaccine exemptions from Oregon's school immunization law.

Kaiser Permanente serves over 600,000 members in Oregon and Southwest Washington, about a quarter of whom are children. In 2017, 79.7% of our two year-old members met the CDC recommended immunizations outlined by CIS Combo 7. We're proud to have the highest immunization rate of any major health plan in Oregon and yet we worry about the remaining 20.3% of our two-year old members who are not meeting this benchmark.

WHO'S AT RISK?

The 21.5% percent of our two year-old members who are not fully vaccinated include:

- (1) families who got behind on vaccines when they lost their insurance and are trying to catch up.
- (2) families who have been fooled by internet fear tactics and a 1998 pseudo-study that has since been debunked and is widely rejected by the scientific community.
- (3) children who are medically unable to get vaccines – and count on the rest of the community to keep them safe from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Normally, in communities where only a few families choose not to vaccinate, all children (vaccinated and unvaccinated), are protected by herd, or community, immunity. But when non-vaccination reaches a certain threshold, that protection is lost. Today, we have communities in Oregon that are at risk of reaching that threshold! One of the key contributors to that is personal exemptions. **In Oregon, we have the dubious distinction of having one of the highest personal exemption percentages in the county with 7.5% of kindergarteners un- or under-vaccinated.**

HB 3063 will help parents to both protect their own child, as well as ensure that we reach the threshold of community immunity.

WE HAVE DONE THIS BEFORE:

There are many well-known precedents for regulating individual choice based on community benefit.

- (1) Car-seats – Parents are required to use approved car seats for their children. This is both for the safety of the child, as well as to minimize the very large medical expenses that sometimes accompany motor vehicle accidents.
- (2) Smoking – It's legal to smoke in your house. It's not legal to smoke in most public places because while we all have the right to choose to smoke, we do not have the right to impose our second-hand smoke on others.

HB 3063 is similar in that it recognizes that an unvaccinated child attending school puts other children at risk.

At Kaiser Permanente, we practice evidence-based medicine, looking to science to guide our clinical decisions. And the science is very clear regarding vaccines:

- (1) they save lives,
- (2) they are effective, and
- (3) they are the best weapon we have to prevent some very deadly diseases.

SUMMARY:

As I know you do, I care deeply about the children of Oregon.

As I know you do, I believe strongly that we together must do everything possible to keep them safe and healthy.

Today, we at Kaiser Permanente ask you to look at the irrefutable evidence-based science and cast your vote for the health of all the children of our unique and extraordinary state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of HB 3063. I urge your yes vote.

Sincerely,

Dr. Cynthia McPhee
Pediatrician
Adjunct Professor, OHSU Doernbecher Children's Hospital
KP Lead for Childhood Quality
KP Co-Chair, Immunization Practices Committee