

Date: 2/28/2019

Re: Support for HB 3063

Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

I am Derek Lam, MD, MPH Associate Professor of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, OR, writing to urge your support of HB 3063, which seeks to remove the non-medical vaccine exemption from Oregon law. I primarily care for children with diseases of the ears, nose, and throat, and in addition to my medical degree, I also have a Masters of Public Health, and I am actively involved in clinical outcomes research.

I have several reasons for supporting this bill:

- 1) The current measles outbreak in southwest Washington and Oregon is causing significant harm to affected individuals with risk of serious health consequences for those who contract this disease, and it is **ENTIRELY PREVENTABLE**. Not long ago, measles was considered eradicated in this country, and it is an embarrassment and a travesty that it has re-emerged due to the high rate of vaccination exemptions in our community.
- 2) The populations at risk of exposure are precisely those who are most vulnerable, namely newborn infants who are too young for the standard measles-mumps-rubella vaccine administered at one year of age, and those with compromised immune function like cancer survivors and transplant recipients among others. **Lack of community immunity leaves these vulnerable populations exposed** with no other option for prevention other than avoidance of all public spaces which is not realistic for most families.
- 3) There is absolutely **no credible evidence to support non-medical exemptions for vaccination**. Vaccination is perhaps the single greatest public health intervention of the modern era, and it has saved countless lives. Modern vaccines are safer than they have ever been. Not only has the initial study suggesting a link between vaccination and autism been entirely debunked, there is now a large body of evidence proving that there is no link whatsoever between vaccination and autism. The risk of adverse outcomes related to vaccination are vanishingly small compared to the overwhelming benefit both to the vaccinated individual and the greater community.

I write to you not just as a health care professional who believes strongly in evidence-based medicine, but also as a concerned parent of a newborn infant. My son is only two weeks old. Beyond all the objective data supporting my position, it is difficult to convey the frustration and anxiety that I feel every time we take our son out of the house. We have had to significantly curtail any activities in public spaces that might allow him to be exposed to measles. All this because of the ignorance and misinformation among parents who choose not to vaccinate their children for no good reason, thereby putting at risk not just their own children, but my son as well.

I ask the committee to protect the lives of children including my newborn son.
Please support HB 3063. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DLAM', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Derek Lam MD, MPH
Associate Professor
Dept of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery
Oregon Health and Science University