

April 14, 2019  
Regarding HB 2510

Dear Oregon Legislature,

I am a physician from Pennsylvania who is also the parent of a child with PANDAS. I am writing in support of HB 2510 which creates a permanent PANDAS awareness day in Oregon. A similar bill was passed in Pennsylvania in October 2018 as HR 1107. Increased awareness of PANS/PANDAS is certainly needed. Even as a family physician with medical education and resources, it took me nine months to diagnose my daughter with PANDAS, despite her classic presentation. She was evaluated by four physicians and I spoke to numerous other colleagues in many medical fields. No one correctly identified her illness. Finally her psychologist reached out in desperation to her listserv trying to find some guidance. One suggestion of PANDAS was made and once I learned what that was, we were able to quickly initiate appropriate treatment, resulting in my daughter's excellent response and recovery. However, she and my family suffered for nine unnecessary months due to lack of awareness.

Increased PANDAS education is needed at medical schools and residencies, but also amongst the public. When a child's behavior undergoes a sudden and dramatic change, people need to first consider the possibility of an infectious cause. A permanent awareness day will help to improve diagnosis and treatment of children when it is most needed and most effective. Rapid identification and treatment result in the best chance of complete recovery.

Many resources are wasted as children with PANS/PANDAS are inappropriately treated with psychiatric medications while a phantom mental illness is chased, when in reality they just need treatment for strep (or other pathogen). Counseling and other psychiatric services can best be utilized when the underlying etiology is identified. Money is saved and young lives are improved. Children treated properly for PANS/PANDAS can recover, succeed in school, and become contributing members of society. In our country, where the numbers of children on psychiatric drugs and disability rolls continue to climb, it is more important than ever to identify and treat root causes that can be cured. A child does not have to be labeled mentally ill. Her strep infection can be appropriately treated and she can recover from her symptoms of debilitating anxiety and OCD. However, this treatment can not and does not happen unless PANS/PANDAS is widely recognized. Parents, teachers, school nurses, physicians, and all people can be made aware.

This bill can improve and even save lives for Oregon's youth. Please give HR 2510 your supportive vote.

Respectfully,  
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