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Senate Committee On Health Care
Oregon State Senate
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Patterson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jennifer Harris and I am a healthcare professional writing to you today in support of Senate Bill 42 and the -1 amendment. Vaccines prevent mass outbreaks, eradicate diseases, and ultimately save lives. But right now, access to vaccines is at risk for many across our state.

I care deeply about access to vaccines in Oregon because I have seen firsthand the impact these programs can make in rural communities. Rural Health Clinics (RHC) serve over 60% of rural America but do not receive any of the \$5 Billion in grant funds that FQHC programs do. Without programs like the Vaccine Access Program, the financial burden is placed on local RHCs where there are already limited resources. Without access to vaccines in their rural communities, many people would likely go unvaccinated due to a lack of resources to access them.

Oregon's Vaccine Access Program (VAP) is absolutely critical to the health of Oregonians, and right now it is at risk of being significantly underfunded. This kind of massive reduction – currently estimated to be 65-70% of enrolled clinics – will threaten vaccine access statewide and particularly for low-income populations, rural communities, and historically marginalized groups.

This potential funding reduction comes at the worst possible time. Last year, our communities saw the highest number of measles cases in 30 years and the largest pertussis outbreak in the last 50 years with over 1,000 cases. Meanwhile, childhood immunization rates are at the lowest we've seen in Oregon since 2018.

Please take action to protect the health of Oregonians.

Vote yes on Senate Bill 42 and the -1 amendment.

Thank you,

Jennifer Harris