

Dear members of Senate Committee on Healthcare,

I strongly oppose SB 1598 and urge you to reject this bill.

This bill proposes unchecked authority by grants broad power to unelected public health officials to make decisions affecting all of us, without further legislation or public debate. This is completely unacceptable, especially after what we witnessed during the COVID19 pandemic, where unelected bureaucrats made up rules affecting all aspects of life (and admitted on record after the fact there was zero medical or scientific evidence for some of those, like the 6ft separation rule) that were not to the benefit of our society. The trust in public health authorities is currently very low because of such actions by unelected bureaucrats, mandates, and constant pressure to comply without question from the health authorities. Handing over health-making decisions to unelected officials now will plunge any trust in OHA recommendations further, possibly to disastrous results.

Medical decisions should be made by patients and their doctors, with consideration of individual specifics, not some one-size-fits all template produced by somebody not accountable to those patients or the voting public. This completely defies the fundamental principle of informed consent, without which the medical field cannot and will not be trusted with potentially life-saving advice.

Taxpayer-funded and insurance company payment mandates proposed by this bill are completely unacceptable. Oregonians and Oregon small businesses are already struggling in this economy, and forcing more taxes and undoubtedly higher insurance premiums to support this is going to further hurt Oregonians, who cannot afford to pay more for things they did not ask for.

This bill seems like a political response to the changes occurring at the federal level, rather than any genuine attempt to better the lives of Oregonians, and as such it looks really bad for our legislators. I sincerely hope Oregon is better than that. Our current system works just fine, please leave it alone. Please reject this bill.