

February 8, 2026

To: Senate Committee on Healthcare

re: **SB 1598**

Dear Senators:

I am writing as a proud Oregonian and a retired healthcare allied health professional, as well as a person who is immune-compromised.

Please strongly support and pass SB 1598 so that all Oregonians may have the freedom of choice to receive medically-approved vaccination if we choose it to protect our health.

Access to vaccines approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is a vital part of preventive health care for individuals and communities. **And in our state, we need our Public Health Officer to be able to require healthcare coverage of these U.S. approved vaccines.** If healthcare plans do not cover, then health will belong only to the people with deep pockets. That is un-American.

Personally I, and many of my family and friends, found it literally frightening last year when it looked like Washingtonians, Californians, Hawaiians and others would have their vaccines not only available sooner than we Oregonians, but also paid for by health insurance when we might not.

Not only was our health coverage questionable, but needing to get a personal appointment with a physician for an individual Rx was a huge barrier. Especially for someone like me who is disabled. And, as you probably have experienced yourselves, many providers are leaving healthcare since 2020 thus lengthening waits for appointments from days/weeks to weeks/months long time frames.

Therefore, it was impossible for me to get a timely appointment with my primary care MD for the Rx. Her office was overwhelmed, so even if I could have found someone to drive me to the appointment, I was unable to get one. These were unnecessary barriers which seriously threatened my health due to my age and my personal health conditions, which I will not detail here. Becoming ill with COVID-19, flu or RSV is quite likely to be life-threatening or at the very least further disabling for me per my providers.

To improve access, again for those of us who choose vaccination of our own free will, we need to have Oregon's Public Health Officer empowered to issue a Standing Order for US DHHS approved vaccines, which can then be signed by the Governor. Requiring all insurance plans in Oregon to cover these vaccines will protect public health and be fair to all Oregonians.

Passage of SB 1598 would remove barriers and provide coverage for Oregonians and can protect our health and even – for some of us – our very lives.

Please vote Yes on SB 1598.

Thank you.

Denise Cedar