

Submitter: Daniel Fager
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1598

Chair Patterson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dan Fager, and I am writing in support of Senate Bill 1598. To me, access to preventative care is essential because it builds long term wellness, protects my family and the community, and is far more cost-effective than paying for care after a medical crisis occurs.

Last fall, federal changes to COVID vaccine recommendations created a lot of confusion in my household and community. We wanted to get the updated vaccine but were getting mixed messages about where or how we could get it, whether a prescription was needed, and if there would be an associated out-of-pocket cost. The earliest appointment to reach my primary care doctor was over nine months out, which would get us the vaccine around the time infections are waning. It would also mean my wife and I would have to take time off and schedule separate appointments instead of easy access at a local pharmacy at a convenient time. After all this trouble finding answers, we considered driving up to Washington State to get vaccinated, as we heard others did. Ultimately, it was not within our ability to make the drive, and we had to delay getting the vaccine due to these barriers.

This was the worst time to see that kind of delay, as peak infection season could hit at any moment and we were left at risk during that delayed window. My story is a common one - many other families and community members in Oregon also faced the question of how to overcome these barriers and get the care they needed, especially as many of us were trying to navigate an ever-changing situation with little clarity.

This bill is not a mandate and does not alter the doctor-patient relationship but rather increases access to care. Those of us who want to access immunizations should be able to have that freedom without extra barriers. This bill is an important step to ensure Oregonians have the choice to access vaccines. I urge you to support Senate Bill 1598.

Thank you,
Dan Fager