

Submitter: Laura Balestreri MD
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1598

My name is Dr. Laura Balestreri and I am a pediatrician who is worried about vaccine affordability and access in Oregon. I have been a pediatrician for over 20 years and I currently work in Southern Oregon at a Federally Qualified Health Center. The families I serve are struggling in many ways, and most of them receive vaccines at my office through the Vaccines For Children Program. The ability to receive vaccines at pharmacies, schools, and public health departments increases their access to protection. I have personally seen several cases of severe influenza this season in patients who routinely got influenza vaccines in the past, but were unable to access them easily this season. I support SB1598 to ensure that Oregon families do not have additional cost or logistical barriers to obtaining preventative vaccines. This bill champions patient choice, by ensuring those who want immunizations are able to do so without having to worry about payment or making a hard to come by appointment with their primary care physician or pediatrician to undergo mandatory shared decision making.

SB1598:

Protects access to preventive care. SB 1598 helps ensure Oregonians can continue to access evidence-based preventive services without new barriers or delays.
Responds to recent federal changes. Shifting federal guidance in 2025 limited access to certain immunizations, creating confusion for patients and providers without being based on new safety or efficacy data.

Ensures continuity of coverage. Updating Oregon's insurance code to June 30, 2025 preserves coverage for widely supported, evidence-based preventive services.

Supports patient choice. SB 1598 does not mandate immunizations or require anyone to receive care.

Allows Oregon to act nimbly. Standing order authority gives the state tools to respond quickly when federal guidance changes and access is at risk.

Respects medical judgment. Providers may continue to practice according to evidence-based recommendations and their clinical expertise.

Keeps decisions between patients and providers. SB 1598 reinforces science-based care while maintaining flexibility and trust in the clinician-patient relationship.

Thank you,

Laura Balestreri, MD