

February 9, 2026

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



Dear Chair Nosse and Members of the Committee,

My name is Meg Olson and I am writing in support of Senate Bill 1598 on behalf of the parent, provider, and community advocates of Oregon Families for Vaccines. As federal guidance on preventive care and immunizations continues to change, families across our state have faced barriers to accessing care and confusion as they attempt to navigate these changes.

In September, when the federal recommendations for the updated COVID-19 vaccine were narrowed, many of our advocates reached out to us for help and shared the impact of these changes and the barriers they faced trying to access the vaccine for themselves and their families.

Jay in Jackson County navigated conflicting directions from her local pharmacist and was unable to see a primary care provider to obtain a prescription in time - she contracted COVID while waiting for the confusion to be sorted. She couldn't be here today but she gave me permission to share that she suffers long-term effects including worsening chronic pain and other impacts on her existing disabilities.

Erin Presby from Newberg and her husband took their three kids up to Washington State to get them COVID vaccines after weeks of searching and not finding an access point in Oregon without a copay.

Amanda Apple is in Tualatin. Her pediatrician told her they were deciding against stocking the vaccine because of the confusion surrounding the federal changes, so she struggled to find an access point for her children.

Kelly Rose, here in Salem, was seven months pregnant when her husband couldn't access a COVID vaccine last fall because he didn't have a primary care provider who could get him a prescription.

Heather's husband in Bend took several trips to pharmacies in his area, spent hours trying to coordinate on the phone with his doctor's office, and felt lucky he was able to get his vaccine after his ordeal, but knew it should be easier.

Kathleen Juergens spent several days calling around to pharmacies in Portland and ended up paying hundreds of dollars out of pocket for a vaccine last fall.

The confusion created by the federal government is tangible and real in our communities. Going forward, Oregon must be able to act quickly and save families from confusion. I want to note that there is an active measles outbreak that was just officially declared last week. I personally just took my son in to receive his second dose of the measles vaccine early in an attempt to be proactive about this. If there had been any question of that dose being covered by insurance, it would have made families like mine think twice.

This bill preserves choice for Oregon families, allowing them to access immunizations while allowing providers to continue to make decisions about patient care with evidence-based recommendations. This bill in no way mandates immunizations - it allows Oregonians the freedom to make medical decisions about preventative care without worrying about out-of-pocket costs during a time when affordability is already a concern for our families and communities across the state.

Please protect vaccine access and support Senate Bill 1598.

Thank you,
Meg Olson, Oregon Families for Vaccines