OREGON PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION

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February 20, 2017

TO: The Honorable Mitch Greenlick, Chair
House Committee on Health Care

FROM: Cate Wilcox, Maternal and Child Health Manager
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SUBJECT: HB 2644, Vitamin K

Chair Greenlick and members of the committee;

I am Cate Wilcox, Maternal and Child Health Manager of the Public Health Division of the Oregon Health Authority. I am here to discuss the importance of babies receiving a Vitamin K injection at birth to prevent bleeding that can lead to brain damage and even death.

All infants are born with very little vitamin K stored in their bodies. In some infants, this deficiency in vitamin K leads to deficiency of active clotting factors and can result in hemorrhage, a condition called Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding. Although Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding is uncommon, the consequences can be devastating. Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding can cause bleeding into the brain, which can lead to brain damage and even death.

Since 1961, the American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that all newborns receive a single dose of intramuscular vitamin K to prevent Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding. Infants who do not get the vitamin K shot at birth are at 81 times greater risk for developing Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding than infants who do get the shot.[1] Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding is rare in the United States because most newborns get the vitamin K shot. In parts of the world where the vitamin K shot isn't available, Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding is more common. It is difficult to estimate the number of Oregon infants with Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding but

we do know that death due to Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding is rare among Oregon infants.

Recognizing the important role of vitamin K in preventing Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding, existing Oregon law requires birth attendants ensure that newborns receive vitamin K within 24 hours of birth. The Oregon Health Authority provides education to providers and parents promoting the importance of vitamin K at birth. Although multiple studies have found the Vitamin K shot to be safe[2] and the Vitamin K shot has been routinely given to newborns in Oregon and across the country at birth since 1961, some parents refuse the shot due to concerns about its safety.

In 2013, the Tennessee Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) investigated a cluster of Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding in cases where parents had declined intramuscular vitamin K administration at birth. The reasons cited by parents for declining the vitamin K injection included a concern about an increased risk for leukemia, and impression that the injection was unnecessary, and a desire to minimize the newborns exposure to "toxins".[3] Concerns about an association between the vitamin K shot and childhood cancer as well as concerns about other ingredients in the shot have been investigated and scientists have continued to find the vitamin K shot to be safe for infants.

Existing Oregon law allows for newborns to receive vitamin K either by injection or orally. There is limited information available on the effectiveness of oral vitamin K and there are no widely agreed upon standards for an oral preparation.

In summary, the vitamin K shot is important for all Oregon babies to prevent Vitamin K Deficiency Bleeding, a dangerous condition that can cause life-long disability or death.

Thanking you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

[1] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/blooddisorders/documents/vitamin-k-provider.pdf
[2] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/blooddisorders/documents/vitamin-k-provider.pdf
[3] Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6245a4.htm?s_cid=mm6245a4_w