

DATE 2/26/2019

TO Oregon State Legislature, Senate Committee on Health Care

Re: Support for HB 3063

Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

I am Emily Bronec, MD, FAAP, a general pediatrician who lives and works in Portland, OR. I am writing to urge your support of HB 3063, which seeks to remove the non-medical vaccine exemption from Oregon law.

The non-medical vaccine exemption has been a dangerous loop-hole that leaves many vulnerable children and adults at risk for contracting vaccine preventable diseases. I thankfully have not seen or treated diphtheria or polio or tetanus, simply because vaccines work. Unfortunately, I have witnessed significant morbidity and several deaths from other vaccine preventable diseases, due to declining immunization rates. These have included pertussis (whooping cough), pneumococcal disease, and mumps. Nothing is more devastating than to be involved in the care of an infant, too young to be vaccinated, on life support due to the overwhelming effects of pertussis on the infant body. Nothing is more frustrating than to know that this could have been entirely prevented with adequate immunization rates and herd immunity.

As a physician and pediatrician, I've spent countless hours studying and being educated about vaccines as well as the diseases they prevent. Vaccines, in my opinion, are truly the greatest public health and medical victory that we've had in medicine. As a mother of a toddler and soon to be born infant, I feel worried and concerned that my infant will be at risk for possibly contracting pertussis and measles in a community that does not value vaccines.

In light of the increasing measles outbreak in the Northwest, it has never been clearer to me how important it is that we have adequate immunization rates in our communities. Vaccines are safe, extremely effective, and mostly importantly, save lives. Supporting HB 3063 is NOT about removing choice, it is about protecting vulnerable people who have no choice, especially those who are immunosuppressed, infants, cancer survivors, etc.

Please do the right thing and vote to support HB 3063. Our children's lives depend on it.

Thank you,

Emily M. Bronec, MD, FAAP  
Broadway Medical Clinic