



COALITION OF LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS

February 28, 2019
Testimony to the House Committee on Health Care
Support of HB 3063

Chair Salinas, Vice Chairs Nosse and Hayden and Members of the House Committee on Health Care:

The Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials (CLHO) represents the 33 local public health authorities in Oregon who work tirelessly to protect the public's health and prevent the spread of disease. The Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials supports HB 3063, which would remove the non-medical vaccine exemption, and we urge the committee to support this bill.

Vaccines are safe and effective. The diseases that vaccines prevent still pose a real threat for to our communities; especially children that cannot be vaccinated due to medical reasons. Vaccines are one of the most important tools we have to protect the public's health. Unfortunately, as the recent measles outbreak in the Metro area, and the Pertussis outbreak in Lane County have demonstrated, diseases like measles and whooping cough are making a comeback in large part because parents are choosing not to vaccinate their children.

While the Oregon Legislature revamped the non-medical exemption in 2015 we haven't seen the steady increase in immunization rates we were all working toward. There was an initial increase in vaccination rates; however, the latest statistics show that 7.5 percent of Oregon kindergartners had nonmedical exemptions in 2018.¹ This 7.5 percent is below the 95 percent Oregon needs to get herd immunity for measles.

HB 3063, would provide the clarity and safety message to parents, facilities and schools that vaccines are safe and effective and an important strategy for reducing risk of the spread of disease in communities.

Vaccinations are safe and protect everyone's health. From the newborn baby too young to receive vaccinations to individuals whose immune system is compromised, HB 3063 will provide that community protection to our most vulnerable.

Thank you.

¹ Oregon Health Authority website -

<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/PREVENTIONWELLNESS/VACCINESIMMUNIZATION/GETTINGIMMUNIZED/Documents/SchLawSum.pdf>, accessed February 27, 2019

For more information please contact Morgan Cowling, Executive Director
morgan@oregonclho.org | 503-329-6923 | oregonclho.org