

To Representatives on the House Health Care Committee:

My name is Matthew Gerber. I work as a registered nurse on the Adult Bone Marrow Transplant inpatient unit at Oregon Health and Sciences University.

I spend my work hours caring for people undergoing cancer treatment. Some patients are newly diagnosed and receive initial chemotherapy treatments. Others have failed previous treatments and rely on chemotherapy followed by a stem cell infusion as their last chance to beat their cancer. All of these patients lose their immune systems and are susceptible to illnesses that may not cause harm to an immunocompetent adult.

Patients who receive peripheral blood stem cell transplants are unique among patients in that their immune systems are reduced to those of newborns. They lose immunity to all diseases for which they were previously immunized. When it is safe for them to do so, they will be reimmunized with these vaccinations. Unfortunately, this can take months to years, time where my patients are susceptible to these diseases.

Personal and philosophical reasons to refuse vaccines must no longer be allowed under Oregon law. Public health should outweigh the ability of citizens to refuse vaccines due to personal preferences. It is time to take a stand to protect all Oregonians from preventable diseases. It is time to stand for the greater good. It is time to pass HB3063.

Sincerely,

Matthew Gerber, RN, BSN, OCN, BMTCN

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