

Hood River Clinic and Administration
849 Pacific Ave
Hood River, OR 97031
541-386-6380

School Based Health Center
1220 Indian Creek Road
Hood River, OR 97031
541-308-8345

Stevenson Clinic
875 SW Rock Creek Dr
Stevenson, WA 98648
509-427-4212

The Dalles Clinic
1040 Webber Street
The Dalles, OR 97031
541-386-6380

White Salmon Clinic
65371 Highway 14
White Salmon, WA 98672
509-493-2133

www.onecommunityhealth.org

Letter of Support for Oregon Senate Bill 42

Committee on Senate Health Care
Oregon State Senate
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for Senate Bill 42 - Protecting Vaccine Access in Oregon

Dear Senator Patterson and members of the Committee,

As the CEO of One Community Health, I am writing to express our organization's strong support for Senate Bill 42, which provides critical bridge funding for Oregon's Vaccine Access Program.

One Community Health (OCH) is a 501(c)(3) federally qualified migrant and community health center (FQHC) that has served populations in the Columbia Gorge for over 30 years. Our mission is to advance the health and social justice of all members of our community, and we welcome all individuals under our healthcare banner irrespective of their ability to pay or any other exclusionary factors that could contribute towards health disparity and inequity. We provide equitable access to integrated dental, medical and behavioral healthcare to all, but our target populations are children and adults from low-income and communities of color. Our patients are rural residents with 38% of our ~45,000 patients identifying as from a community of color (Native American and Latina/o) and 30% are underserved. Over the past 18 months, 59% of our patients are on Medicare or Medicaid and 13% are self-pay or uninsured.

The urgency of this legislation cannot be overstated. Our clinic directly witnesses the devastating impact of vaccine-preventable diseases on our most vulnerable patients. The alarming trends outlined in recent data are reflected in what we see daily at our clinic:

- Oregon is experiencing the highest number of measles cases in 30 years
- We are in the midst of the largest pertussis outbreak in 50 years with over 1,000 cases
- Childhood immunization rates have fallen to the lowest levels since 2018

Without the immediate passage of SB42, the Vaccine Access Program faces an estimated reduction of 65-70% of currently enrolled clinics. For our patients, many of whom are uninsured or underinsured, this would create insurmountable barriers to receiving essential preventive care.

The \$1.8 million investment for 5.5 FTE positions and the one-time \$5 million investment for billable vaccine requested in SB42 represent a minimal but crucial investment compared to the enormous healthcare and societal costs of preventable disease outbreaks. As a non-profit healthcare provider operating on thin margins, we rely on the Vaccine Access Program to ensure we can continue providing immunization services to our community.

Our clinic serves many patients from low-income populations, rural communities, and historically marginalized groups—precisely the populations that will be most severely impacted if vaccine access is reduced. While a more sustainable vaccine finance model is being developed for implementation by 2026, we cannot afford a gap in services during this critical time.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 42 and ensure its swift passage. This is truly the worst possible time to risk vaccine access in Oregon, and the consequences of inaction would fall hardest on those with the fewest resources to manage preventable illnesses.

Thank you for your consideration. I am available to discuss this issue further or provide testimony regarding the impact of the Vaccine Access Program on our patients and community.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Griffith
Chief Executive Officer
One Community Health