



DATE: March 15, 2025

TO: Senator Patterson, Chair; Senator Hayden, Vice Chair;  
Members of the Senate Committee on Healthcare

FROM: Jaime Peterson, MD, MPH

SUBJECT: Support for SB 42-1, Protecting Oregon's Vaccine Access Program

My name is Jaime Peterson, and I am a pediatrician and member of the Oregon Pediatric Society (OPS), the state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Our members are committed to improving the health and well-being of all Oregon children. I work at Oregon Health & Science University, a leader in medical training that provides the highest level of care to children in Oregon. I write in strong support of Senate Bill 42-1, which will give crucial funding to our state's Vaccine Access Program (VAP).

The VAP has been essential to Oregon's ability to provide timely vaccinations to children because it eliminates the up-front costs of purchasing vaccines, and provides them at a lower bulk-rate price. Without the funding proposed in SB 42-1, Oregon faces a potential 65-70% reduction in participating clinics, of which there are currently over 300. Rural communities which already experience health care access challenges would be most impacted.

The timing couldn't be more important. In 2024, Oregon saw its highest number of measles cases in 30 years and more than 1,000 pertussis cases, the largest outbreak in 50 years. Our pediatric immunization rates are at their lowest since 2018. We cannot afford to lose this vital program now. I care for many children with chronic and special health needs who are even more vulnerable to preventable illnesses like measles and chicken pox because they cannot receive live vaccines during treatments. Young babies in families need the protection of community immunity to prevent pertussis, which can be fatal to neonates. I have seen a child neurologically devastated by measles, a fate no child in America should have faced given the efficacy of the MMR vaccine. To curb the rise in outbreaks, we need safe, reliable access to childhood vaccines.

Vaccines are effective and safe. Families need access to vaccines in their primary care settings. They need affordable vaccines available in their communities that are ready to be given at the right time and right ages. SB 42 ensures vaccine access for all children in Oregon.

I urge you to vote for SB 42 and the -1 amendment to protect access to vital immunization services for Oregonian children. Thank you for prioritizing public and children's health.