



# Oregon Pediatric Society

A Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Incorporated in Oregon

DATE: March 20, 2025

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

FROM: Anita Geisler, MD  
Oregon Pediatric Society Member

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

My name is Dr. Anita Geisler, 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 write in strong support of Senate Bill 42, which will give crucial funding to our state's Vaccine Access Program (VAP).

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.

As a practicing pediatrician for 30 years, I myself have never seen a patient with measles. This is a testament to the success of vaccinations. We are now experiencing in real time what happens when immunization rates fall. During my pediatric residency training, there were no vaccines for several strains of bacteria causing meningitis; thankfully there are now vaccines for this condition. The wards were full of children with meningitis who needed spinal taps, had lost their hearing, and who developed intellectual disabilities from having meningitis. Some lost their fingers and toes or limbs to the disease caused by one of the bacteria that we vaccinate for today. I have intubated infants with Pertussis/ Whooping Cough. This is a serious disease, even in older children, that causes a frightening and intense cough leading to gagging and vomiting. Infants who do not have the chest wall muscle strength for an effective cough simply stop breathing. These diseases are not eradicated, and without adequate childhood vaccinations and immunization, they will resurge, as we are seeing with Measles right now.

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