

Submitter: Mary Hennrich
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB42
Chair Patterson and members of the Committee--

My name is Mary Lou Hennrich and I live in SE Portland. Some of you know me and my history in Public Health and Healthcare, and others don't--so I'll give a quick bit of my background as it relates to the issue of vaccinations.

I started my career as a Public Health Nurse in 1969 in Multnomah County where I was a school nurse and district nurse in the neighborhoods surrounding Emanuel Hospital. I then became a supervisor of teams of Public Health Nurses in SE and East Multnomah County. During these years, the School Vaccine law was passed and I saw the very positive evidence in the numbers of school aged children being fully vaccinated. I also worked at and supervised staff at what were then called "Well Child Clinics" where we examined infants and children up to age 6 and provided immunizations (vaccinations) at no charge. Low income families were extremely appreciative of this opportunity to get their children protected from the not so distant memory of polio, measles, and "whooping cough."

I later became a Deputy Director of Multnomah County Health Department when we established Primary Care Clinics that now serve 50,000+ County residents (uninsured and Oregon Health Plan.). In 1985 I started the first School Based (Teen) Health Center at Portland's Roosevelt High School. This clinic provides comprehensive primary care services, including immunizations. As the number of diseases that can be prevented by immunization/vaccinations, in addition to the more complex primary care needs, these clinics need to start billing insurance companies if one of their "insureds" came to one of these County clinic locations. (more on this later.)

In 1994, Multnomah County, OHSU, Clackamas County and other statewide Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC's) formed CareOregon and I became its first Executive Director and stayed in this role until 2003 when I became Executive Director of a small public health non-profit that evolved into what is now The Oregon Public Health Institute (OPHI). In my final year before "retirement" fulfilled a contract with the State Public Health Division (OHA) Immunization Program. The purpose of this year+ work was to establish the administrative mechanism to assure that private insurers and CCO's reimburse County Health Departments for their costs in vaccinating the insurers' members.

Many of you/us have seen "outbreaks" of vaccine preventable diseases (whooping cough, measles) in recent years as the number of children and adults being fully

vaccinated has been steadily dropping despite state and local public health staff, along with many private practice pediatricians, primary care providers, parent and school advocates continue their work to keep Oregon's population safe from these totally preventable diseases and even death.

The "byzantine" funding mechanisms that have been "cobbled" together over the past 40+ years are in dire need of more than "study!" but this bill requiring detailed study of vaccine financing in Oregon is an extremely necessary step. A broad coalition of state and local public and private providers, vaccine suppliers, parents and other advocates support this bill as the absolutely necessary next step in ASSURING THAT EVERYONE WHO WANTS TO BE FULLY VACCINATED IS ABLE TO LOCATE AND AFFORD THESE VACCINATIONS.

In my "retirement," as some of you know I am dedicating my time and expertise to actually TRANSFORM our current unaffordable, inequitable, "non-system" into a Universal Plan for All Oregonians. SB 42 is an important step needed on the road to an equitable, affordable, quality health system for Oregon. Our grandchildren and future generations are looking to you our leaders to assure that EVERYONE WHO WANTS TO BE IMMUNIZED is able to do so. Individuals, and communities across Oregon are counting on YOU.

Thank you for your service! Mary Lou Hennrich Retired RN, MSN