

Submitter: Whitney Watson  
On Behalf Of: Future Generations Collaborative  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB42

March 27th, 2025

Chair Patterson, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care

Re: SB 42: Relating to Vaccine Financing

Chair Patterson and Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care. For the record my name is Whitney Watson. I am Iñupiaq from the Native Village of Kotzebue and Mexican on my maternal side and a descendant of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa and the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska on my paternal side. I currently serve as the Policy Mode Lead for the Future Generations Collaborative, a collective impact partnership between Native-serving and Native-specific organizations, institutions, governments, and community members.

I am writing in support of SB 42, because Oregon's Vaccine Access Program (VAP) is absolutely critical to the health of Oregonians, and right now it is at risk of being significantly underfunded. This kind of massive reduction – currently estimated to be 65-70% of enrolled clinics – will threaten vaccine access statewide and particularly for low-income populations, rural communities, and historically marginalized groups.

This potential funding reduction comes at the worst possible time. Last year, communities in Oregon saw the highest number of measles cases in 30 years and the largest pertussis outbreak in the last 50 years with over 1,000 cases. Meanwhile, childhood immunization rates are at the lowest we've seen in Oregon since 2018.

The Future Generations Collaborative understands that immunizations are one of the safest and most effective tools in public health. Vaccines prevent mass outbreaks, eradicate diseases, and save lives. Investment in VAP ensures that all Oregonians have access to vital vaccines that keep our communities safe and thriving.

On behalf of the Future Generations Collaborative, I urge you to vote yes on SB 42.

Respectfully,  
Whitney Watson  
Policy Mode Lead