



Date: March 27, 2025
To: Senate Committee On Health Care
From: Oregon Health Equity Alliance (OHEA)
RE: Support Senate Bill 42

Dear Chair Patterson and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Health Equity Alliance (OHEA) we are writing to support SB 42 today in strong support of the -2 amendment to SB 42 and the critical funding it will provide for Oregon's Vaccine Access Program (VAP).

OHEA is a people of color-led collaborative, organized to center and uplift the wisdom of our communities of color through racial justice informed health equity policies and practices. OHEA serves Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties as one of ten regional health equity coalitions across Oregon.

While OHEA doesn't directly provide vaccines to community members, we recognize the immeasurable value of vaccines being available, combating misinformation, and encouraging communities to protect themselves and one another by staying up to date and managing their health. The history of medical racism has pushed communities of color to the margins of accessing preventative care, creating an environment of distrust with the burden of sickness, medical costs, and undue stress ultimately on community members.

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. For our community, this would mean even more barriers to preventative care, the most foundational of medical care we require to maintain our health.

The timing couldn't be more crucial. In 2024, Oregon saw its highest number of measles cases in 30 years and over 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.

SB 42-1's \$5 million allocation for vaccine purchases and \$1.8 million for program administration represents a smart investment in Oregon's public health infrastructure. Because the program replenishes immunization funds through quarterly billing, this one-time investment in the purchase of vaccines will have lasting benefits for our communities. Additionally, the Oregon Health Authority has committed to continuing the work the Vaccine Finance Reform Steering Committee began last year to explore more sustainable models for vaccine financing that the state could implement in the future.

I urge you to support SB 42 and the -1 amendment to protect access to vital immunization services for Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Oregon Health Equity Alliance