



BAKER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
2200 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Baker City, OR 97814  
Phone: 541.523.8211  
Fax: 541.523.8242  
TTY: 800.735.2900



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February 11, 2026

Re: SB 1598: Vaccine Access

Position: Support

Chair Patterson and Members of the Senate Health Care Committee:

My name is Chastity, and I am writing in support of SB 1598 on behalf of Baker County. As a rural community, we know how critical reliable vaccine access is to protecting the health of our children, families, and older adults.

SB 1598 ensures Oregon can rely on science-based, Oregon-specific vaccine recommendations while preserving insurance coverage and protections for vaccine providers. In rural counties like ours, families often have limited provider options. When practices cannot access certain vaccines, it creates real barriers. We must make it easier, not harder, for families to keep their children up to date.

In the 2024–25 school year, only 86% of Oregon kindergarteners were fully vaccinated, well below the 95% needed for community immunity. Rural communities are especially vulnerable to outbreaks due to limited healthcare resources.

The financial impact of an outbreak is significant. Measles cases can cost tens of thousands of dollars each in response and medical expenses. Even a small outbreak would strain local public health systems like ours.

SB 1598 is a proactive step to protect both public health and public resources. I respectfully urge your support.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Chastity  
Baker County