

Kimberly Shields, DO  
1321 NE 99<sup>th</sup> Ave, Ste 200  
Portland, OR 97220

February 26, 2019

Oregon State Legislature  
Senate Committee on Health Care  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Please support HB 3063

Dear Lawmakers,

I am writing in support of HB 3063 as a physician, a mother, and as an Oregonian. Hopefully you have already considered many strong arguments in favor of compulsory childhood vaccination. Therefore I'd like to focus on an often-overlooked set of reasons I support this bill.

No one will dispute that we have a primary care physician (PCP) shortage in Oregon. As PCPs in a medical home model we physicians are constantly challenged to serve as many Oregonians as possible. We carefully fit patients into our schedules like a Tetris game hoping to utilize every last second of resources in the most efficient manner possible. When parents of our patients refuse vaccines, are vaccine-hesitant, or want an "alternate schedule" it puts a cog in our wheel. First, it takes up physician time to try to explore their concerns, debunk myths, and answer questions. Also, it chips away at the patient-physician relationship that is the core of the best available medical care. When I can't convince a family to vaccinate I feel like I've let my child patient down; I worry about that child and lament that I have not provided him with the best and safest health care available. Additionally, alternate vaccine schedules leave more room for mistakes due to the complicated algorithms for appropriate vaccine spacing, the number of vaccines that must be given to complete a series, which vaccines can be given together on the same day, the age limits of each vaccine brand, etc. Lastly, the alternate schedules bring patients to the clinic more frequently which inappropriately uses precious staff time for appointment scheduling, chart prep, the check-in process, and room cleaning to name a few. This is not to mention the increased risk of injury or death that most children incur by the additional time spent in a car.

I'd also like to share my personal feelings on vaccine exemptions. As a mother of 3 young children I can remember the fear I felt when I took my babies out into places with other children. I worried that these other children may not be vaccinated and could be harboring preventable, contagious diseases without even knowing it. When playing at OMSI I'd size up families and move away if my anti-vaccine profiling-alarm sounded. At Music Together class I'd worry I'd made a mistake signing up to be in a closed room with so many other young children. While I'll admit some of my concern was out of proportion to risk it's not fair that I have to worry if another family's lack of scientific understanding of vaccines could harm or even kill my child.

Nothing in this world is without risk, but benefit-harm analysis is clear that vaccines should be given to all those who can safely receive them. Most vaccines work best when everyone is vaccinated and many don't work very well at all unless a large proportion of people are vaccinated. Like many other public health and environmental issues, compliance must be compulsory to prevent harm to the greater good. Most individuals are not equipped to make safe choices about vaccines for lack of time to investigate each layer of vaccine science and for lack of understanding of immunology, statistics, how to analyze scientific papers (including the powers of the studies and the peer-review process), etc. As a society we don't hesitate to intervene on a child's behalf when he is endangered by a human predator and likewise we shouldn't hesitate to intervene when children are left vulnerable to viral and bacterial predators.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Shields, DO