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I am a pediatrician at Olson Pediatric Clinic in Lake Oswego writing to urge your support of HB 3063, which seeks to remove the non-medical vaccine exemption from Oregon law.

In my professional career, I have seen first hand the benefits of vaccines. During my pediatric training at the University of Iowa, there was an outbreak of polio in a religious community. The vaccine against polio is highly effective, and had been available for years at that time (I clearly remember having personally received the first form of the vaccine as a child!).

During my training, and in the early years of my practice, I saw multiple cases of meningitis in infants and young children every winter. It was caused by a bacteria, Haemophilus influenzae, type b (commonly abbreviated as Hib or H. flu). This disease can be fatal or cause neurological defects such as deafness. I have not seen a single case since the current vaccine became available.

Finally, on a more personal note, one of my brothers in law suffered from a congenital heart defect caused when his mother came down with rubella during her pregnancy. He required multiple heart surgeries, which are now commonly done, but at the time, he was among the earliest patients to have had those procedures. Mark lived into his early 30's, when he died of complications of his heart malformation.

Anti-vaccine groups rely on emotion and ignore medical science. They are very vocal, and can be quite vicious against those who disagree with them. I hope this does not dissuade the legislature from doing the right thing.

Please support HB 3063.

Sincerely,

Brian Kittams, M.D.