



To: Joint Ways and Means Committee on Human Services
From: Dawn Nolt, MD MPH
Oregon Health & Science University
Oregon Pediatric Society

Testimony in Support of House Bill 3063

Mr. Co-Chairs and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Dr. Dawn Nolt. I'm honored to testify on behalf of two organizations, which are the Oregon Pediatric Society and OHSU. The Oregon Pediatric Society (OPS) is the state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Our members are committed to improving the health and well-being of all children. OHSU is the only academic health center in Oregon and is dedicated to advancing health sciences through education, research and patient care.

OPS and OHSU are in strong SUPPORT of House Bill 3063, which will eliminate non-medical exemptions from school immunization law.

I would like to share two stories, which occurred in the past 2 months:

A 7-day-old healthy baby girl is exposed to measles. The parents themselves are vaccinated and believe in vaccines. Because of this exposure, the family is now quarantined in their home, and isolated from society, for the next 3 weeks. The parents ask - how can other babies be protected from measles?

A 6-month-old infant is seen at the pediatrician's office. His mother states that she has been afraid to take the child anywhere, for fear of coming in contact with measles. In fact, the mother was very reluctant to bring her little boy even into the doctor's office, for fear that someone in the waiting room may be contagious. The mother asks - in addition to vaccinating her own son, what can be done?

I receive innumerable questions on how to protect children who are undergoing treatment for cancer, bone marrow transplant, Crohn's disease, and the like. My answer is the same - make sure that as many individuals as possible, around these medically fragile children, are vaccinated.

Robust scientific knowledge and broad medical consensus about vaccines make two points very clear:

Vaccines are safe

- Vaccine development takes years.
- Safety is tested in thousands of volunteers before the vaccine is used in the general public.
- Vaccine safety is actively monitored by the CDC and FDA.
- Vaccines do not cause autism nor lead to chronic illnesses.

Vaccines are effective

- Cases of measles, polio, and other infections plummeted in areas where vaccines are widely used.
- Serious and sometimes fatal disease can occur if a child is not vaccinated.
- When vaccinations decline in a given area, that area becomes ground zero for resurgence of previously "eliminated" diseases, such as measles.

Vaccinations protect the patient who is immunized, and benefits the health of the overall community. When vaccine rates fall, the strength of our community immunity is jeopardized. This increases the risk of infection, particularly for our medically fragile citizens.

The stories I shared regarding the 7-day-old baby girl and the 6-month-old little boy highlight the fact that a low community immunity increases, not only the risk, but the fear of infection. Families of medically fragile children restrict their movement in the community, and limit their children's interactions with other children.

Vaccines are safe. Vaccines are effective. Removal of non-medical exemptions will ensure the health of all our children in the state of Oregon.

Thank you for your time and this opportunity to speak in SUPPORT of House Bill 3063. I'm happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dawn L. Nolt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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