



Memorandum

To: Sen. Lee Beyer, Co-Chair, Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services
Rep. Rob Nosse, Co-Chair, Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services
Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services

From: Danielle Sobel, OPCA State and Federal Policy Director
Marty Carty, OPCA Policy Senior Manager

Date: April 24, 2019

Re: Support for HB 3063 A

On behalf of the Oregon Primary Care Association (OPCA), we respectfully request your support for HB 3063 A. OPCA is a non-profit organization, with a mission to support Oregon's 32 community health centers, also known as federally qualified health centers, in leading the transformation of primary care to achieve health equity for all. Community health centers deliver integrated primary care, including dental and behavioral health services, to over **430,000 Oregonians annually**. Community health centers are providers within the CCO networks, providing care to Oregon's underserved populations, including **one in four Oregon Health Plan members**.

In addition to providing high quality integrated medical, dental and behavioral health care, health centers are committed to understanding the circumstances of their patients' lives. Oregon's community health centers serve patients regardless of class or ability to pay. Providers and care teams respect the health care choices their patients make for themselves and their families. They are also committed to reducing health inequity and disparity both in terms of health status and access to, health services. Immunizations are one tool that can significantly reduce the incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases and represent a cost-effective way to foster health equity.

Vaccination is a crucial part of entire community's defense against vaccine-preventable diseases; for the communities served by our health centers, the low vaccination rate in the majority of their communities makes everyone more vulnerable to disease. Vaccines protect the health of the public as a whole, and the decreasing rates of vaccination (7.5% of kindergartners statewide are unvaccinated), means that those who cannot be and/or are not vaccinated, are at increased risk of contracting a potentially life-threatening disease. Our health centers share the responsibility for keeping our communities healthy and safe and it's our duty to help our patients understand that vaccines are safe and effective.

HB 3063 A preserves the health and safety of the many Oregonians who do not have the option of vaccination. As medical treatments continue to advance and more people survive serious conditions, the number of at-risk people in our communities also increases. These are children and adults with cancer, rheumatologic diseases requiring high-dose steroids or other immune suppression, those with HIV, and children born with immune deficiencies. Many of these people cannot be vaccinated and if they contract a vaccine-preventable disease because of the loss of herd immunity (where at least 95% of the population is vaccinated against a disease), the consequences can be serious, and even deadly, for that individual. Health centers are committed to ensuring every one of their eligible

patients has access to, and understands that importance of, immunizations as a way to ensure our children and the communities they grow up are healthy and safe for all residents.

We urge your support of HB 3063 A as the next step in reducing poor health outcomes, increased cost to the healthcare system, and health disparities adversely affecting groups of people who have systematically experienced greater social or economic obstacles to health.

Oregon Primary Care Association
Leading the transformation of care to achieve health equity for all.