



To: Senate Committee on Health Care

From: Dawn Nolt, MD, MPH
Oregon Pediatric Society

Date: February 15, 2019

RE: Opposition to SB 649

Chair Monnes Anderson, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and members of the Committee:

My name is Dr. Dawn Nolt, and I'm providing this testimony for the record on behalf of the Oregon Pediatric Society. I have seen many infections in over 15 years in practice.

- I work as a pediatric infectious diseases physician at Doernbecher Children's Hospital in Oregon.
- I serve as the hospital's medical director for infection prevention.
- I am a regional specialist in handling infections in children who are particularly vulnerable to infections, such as from cancer, transplant, or other immune disorders
- I am a member of an elite national committee of pediatric infectious diseases at the American Academy of Pediatrics.

With my knowledge and expertise in infection, outbreaks and public health, as well as my presence on the national stage regarding pediatric infectious diseases, I am speaking in OPPOSITION to SB 649.

I wish to share short patient stories with you about vaccine-preventable infections of children here in Oregon:

A young boy, unvaccinated by parents' decision, sustains a serious head wound from a farm tractor. Shortly thereafter, he comes in with a terrible infection of his scalp. In addition – all the muscles in his body are locked and spasming. He spends days in the intensive care unit in a medically-induced coma to alleviate the intense pain from his locked and spasming muscles. This is tetanus, an infection which would have been prevented by a vaccine, and spared this child many weeks in the hospital.



A 10 year old boy is hospitalized for pneumonia. This particular illness was quite serious, as he had at least half-a-gallon of pus in in his left lung from a bacteria. The boy had a tube placed into his chest to drain his pus. The name of the bacteria responsible for his lung infection is *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (a fitting name). This bacteria is preventable by a vaccine. The family has continued to not desire vaccination.

A newborn at home starts to cough and gasp. She then has periods in which she stops breathing. She is rushed to the hospital by her parents, and within 6 hours is on a breathing machine in the intensive care unit. This is pertussis (or whooping cough), a disease which strikes hardest at the lungs of small babies. Despite what this baby had to go through, and her family watching so closely at the bedside, the parents do not vaccinate.

Many pediatric physicians, generalists and specialists, can tell many heart-breaking stories of diseases and the vaccines which would have alleviated these children's suffering.

There is plentiful information regarding vaccinations. Vaccines go through a rigorous testing process, often up to 10 years, before becoming available to the general public. The government already mandates that all pertinent information is summarized in a 1-page handout (front and back) which is very readable, and given to every family at the time of vaccination. Further information can be provided by the physician and through the internet upon request.

SB 649 does NOT provide any more clarity to parents regarding vaccination. SB 649 is asking the physician to give a packet of technical information, which is generally incomprehensible to the average person who is not a medical professional. In the guise of providing more information and ensuring informed consent, SB 649 will create uncertainty and confusion. Parents may become more hesitant to vaccinate, not because they were uninformed, but were made to feel less informed.

It also changes the age of consent for vaccines from 15 to 18, taking away an adolescent's ability to choose to protect themselves.



Vaccinations are safe and can prevent infections. This protects the individual child, and the public health at large. We should do all we can to ensure vaccination for every child. We will spare children having to be hospitalized, and prevent outbreaks in our state.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify in OPPOSITION of Senate Bill 649. I will be happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

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