



March 22, 2013

Oregon State Legislature
Senate Committee on Health Care and Human Services
900 Court Street Northeast
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Monnes-Anderson and Committee Members:

The Association of Immunization Managers (AIM), representing 64 federally-funded state, local and territorial immunization program managers, encourages you to vote in support of SB 132—a bill that seeks to fortify immunization exemption requirements for children in schools and child care facilities.

Under SB 132, parents choosing to exempt their child from vaccine requirements must submit a signed form that shows that they have spoken with a medical professional about the risks and benefits of vaccination or taken an online vaccine education course. These provisions ensure that parents receive scientifically sound information from trained professionals while still protecting a parent's right to care for their children as they see fit. Additionally, these provisions seek to end exemptions of convenience – when exempting from vaccination is easier than obtaining the vaccine.

Increases in vaccine exemptions pose a danger to Oregonian children from the increased risk of contracting an infectious disease like measles, mumps, or pertussis (whooping cough). Research has shown that states with easy to obtain vaccine exemptions have higher rates of pertussis than those states with harder to obtain exemptions¹. High exemption rates leading to low herd immunity also put children and adults who cannot receive vaccinations like those with compromised immune systems in greater danger of contracting an infectious disease.

Unnecessary vaccine exemptions are not only a matter of endangering the health and well-being of Oregonians; they also have an economic impact. Research has shown that easy to obtain exemptions increase societal costs of vaccine preventable diseases like pertussis by an estimated 50%², placing additional stress on already tight state, local budgets and family budgets.

SB 132 protects parents' right to express their personal objections to vaccinating their children, while at the same time making sure that exemptions are not taken out of convenience. AIM urges you to protect the health of all Oregonians by voting in support of SB 132.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Claire Hannan".

Claire Hannan, MPH
Executive Director

¹ Omer SB, et al. Nonmedical Exemptions to School Immunization Requirements – Secular Trends and Association of State Policies With Pertussis Incidence. *JAMA* 2006; 1757-1763

² Wells KB, Omer SB. The financial impact of a state adopting a personal/philosophical belief exemption policy: Modeling the cost of pertussis disease in infants, children and adolescents. *Vaccine* 2012; 5901-5904.