

Opinion: Why we need to know more about vaccines

BY CRYSTAL SHAW, RN, BSN, PHN

After only 10 cases of measles and zero deaths, Oregon has declared an emergency and House Bill 3063 has been proposed. Voted through the Ways and Means Committee on April 26, 2019, HB 3063 eliminates philosophical and religious exemptions, thus removing a parent's right to decline childhood immunizations. If a child misses one vaccine or if the parents want to delay some of the vaccines, those in childcare, pre-school, and K-12 would not be allowed to attend unless they have a medical exemption. This involves all public, private, parochial, and charter schools. If this bill passes the house and senate floor, mandates will begin on August 1, 2020. This bill "prohibits a child from attending in-person school-related activities" and "allows Oregon Health Authority to recommend additional diseases against which children may be immunized." I, along with many others, find this unclear and feel it needs to be clarified.

Senator Kim Thatcher proposed 29 amendments to HB 3063. "House Bill 3063 abolishes informed consent, undermines the Hippocratic oath, and puts the Oregon Health Authority in between children and their doctors," she said. "Unelected bureaucrats and Pharma should not be making decisions that are best made by doctors and their patients." Forcing an injection on a person before that person can enter a public space destroys personal autonomy and freedom. It takes away choice and is a violation of our personal rights.

We are constantly told that the science is settled, that vaccines are safe and effective. While they might be effective, their safety is questionable. Every pharmaceutical drug

has to go through a rigorous gold standard double-blind placebo study. Vaccines are the *only* drugs on the market that are exempt from a double-blind placebo study. There have been no safety studies for simultaneously administered vaccines or for vaccines given to pregnant women.

Vaccine manufacturers are also exempt from any civil action for damages arising from a vaccine injury or death. The federal Vaccine Injury Compensation Program was created under the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986 to provide compensation to those injured. The payout over the last 30 years has exceeded \$4 billion in vaccine injury compensation, and over 20,000 petitions for compensation have been filed (HRSA Vaccine Compensation Data, April 2019, hrsa.gov/vaccine-compensation/data/index.html).

Preschoolers in the state of Oregon are currently required to have 27 doses of seven vaccines, rising to a total of 31 doses prior to entering kindergarten. In comparison, a child was fully vaccinated after receiving five doses in 1962 and 24 doses in 1983. Immediately after the aforementioned 1986 law passed, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) added an additional 48 vaccine doses to the vaccine schedule. Currently the CDC recommends 72 doses by the time a child is 18 years old. This includes both the DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis) vaccine and flu shots for pregnant mothers and a Hepatitis B vaccine for babies at birth, a disease that is spread through unprotected sexual intercourse and intravenous drug use.

Jackson and Josephine counties have had zero confirmed cases of measles. Based

on Oregon Health Authority data, 2,625 students have a nonmedical exemption for vaccines in Jackson County and 1,150 in Josephine County ("Oregon Child Immunization Rates." 2018). HB 3063 could potentially impact 31,521 Oregonian children who currently hold a nonmedical exemption.

Although it is difficult to say how many will comply or how many will refuse, this could have a devastating impact on our schools. According to Oregon Health Authority (oregon.gov/oha), Jackson County's Siskiyou School reports that 71 percent of its children have a nonmedical exemption and Josephine County's Dome School has a 78 percent rate. The nonmedical exemption rate for Applegate Valley schools is lower: Applegate Valley School—30 percent, Hidden Valley High School—10 percent, and Ruch Outdoor Community School—24 percent. Schools might shut down, childcare owners could lose their businesses, and families might have to choose who stays home from work in order to homeschool, which could force many to leave the state.

With risk, there must be choice. Let's please focus on Oregon's real emergencies. *No* on HB 3063.

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Note: At publication time, HB 3063 appeared to be dead due to bargaining between political parties. However, the author informs us that there has been talk on social media of reinstating this bill, possibly in the next session.