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Oregon Public Health Association  
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## Vaccine Bill Public Hearing on 4/24/19 Vaccine Report and Press Release from Clackamas County PH

OPHA Members,

OPHA leadership believes that vaccination is a critical tool to prevent the spread of serious communicable disease. Herd immunity is essential to protecting community health, particularly our most vulnerable, such as those with compromised immune systems and very young children. Millions of vaccinations have been given worldwide saving lives and proving to be safe and effective for the vast majority of the world's people.

OPHA supports **HB 3063**, which eliminates non-medical exemptions from school immunization law. **HB 3063 has been scheduled for a public hearing and work session on Wednesday, April 24 at 8:30-10:30 am in Hearing Room F in the State Capitol. Please let [Jessica Nischik-Long](#) know if you are able to attend. We can coordinate with other public health organizations.**

Our advocacy team urges you to express your support for this legislation as a public health professional and member of OPHA. Many people opposed to this bill will be at the hearing. It is important for legislators to know that there are supporters of the bill. Please attend if you are able.

Find your legislators on the [Oregon State Legislature's website](#). Learn more about the bill and other legislation OPHA is supporting this session [on our website](#).

**Clackamas County released an announcement about the threats of declining vaccination coverage, along with a Public Health Impact Report. Read below for more information:**

## Media Release: Declining vaccination coverage threatens Clackamas County residents

Clackamas County Public Health officials announced Thursday that despite vaccines being one of the safest and most effective public health interventions, vaccine-preventable diseases are on the rise.

According to the [Public Health Impact report released today](#), a growing trend of delaying vaccinations, or exempting from them entirely, has contributed to increases in vaccine-preventable outbreaks in the United States. The report also sites that lack of access to health care services is a significant issue.

“For over 50 years, immunizations have saved more than a billion lives and prevented countless illnesses and disabilities in the United States.” said Dr. Sarah Present, Clackamas County Health Officer. “Vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles, mumps, and whooping cough, are still a threat that continue to infect U.S. children, resulting in hospitalizations and deaths every year.”

Fast facts about vaccination coverage in Clackamas County:

- 9.1% (397) of Clackamas County kindergartners have at least one non-medical exemption – higher than both National and State rates
- 6.2% (3,820) of all Clackamas County students (K-12) have one or more non-medical exemptions
- 3.4% (2,124) of all Clackamas County students (K-12) are completely unvaccinated
- 79 students have medical exemptions to one or more vaccines, which accounts for .001% of all Clackamas County students.

The reasons for the decline in vaccination coverage are complex and likely driven by a mix of scientific, socioeconomic, sociocultural, and political factors, including:

- Limited access to health care resources and vaccines
- Ease of non-medical exemption
- Lack of trust in vaccine safety, pharmaceutical companies and conventional health care systems
- Misinformation about vaccines has increased skepticism about vaccine science and health risks.

“Vaccines are not just about individual choices. They are about our connection and responsibility to others,” said Richard Swift, Director of Clackamas County’s Health, Housing & Human Services Department. “Declining vaccine coverage has introduced a number of harmful infectious diseases back into our communities and is threatening lives.”

For more information, [read the full Public Health Impact report](#) or visit the Clackamas County Public Health Division’s website at [www.clackamas.us/publichealth](http://www.clackamas.us/publichealth).

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