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May 1, 2019

The Honorable Tina Kotek
House Speaker
Oregon House of Representatives
900 Court Street NE, Room 269
Salem, OR 97301

The Honorable Jennifer Williamson
Democratic Leader
Oregon House of Representatives
900 Court Street NE, H-295
Salem, OR 97301

The Honorable Carl Wilson
Republican Leader
Oregon House of Representatives
900 Court Street NE, H-395
Salem, OR 97301

Re: AMA support for H.B. 3063-B, elimination of non-medical exemptions from required childhood vaccines

Dear Speaker Kotek, Democratic Leader Williamson, Republican Leader Wilson and Members of the Oregon House of Representatives:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and medical student members, I am writing to express our support for House Bill (H.B.) 3063-B, legislation to eliminate non-medical exemptions from required childhood vaccines.

One of the greatest public health success stories is the remarkable decrease in infectious diseases due to the use of vaccines. Unfortunately, the immense success of vaccination in the United States has lulled many parents into complacency with regard to vaccine-preventable diseases like measles, meningitis, polio and diphtheria. In order for previous successes to be maintained, the public and legislators must realize these diseases still exist and can still debilitate and kill. Indeed, the recent and continuing outbreak of measles serves to remind us that our nation's children are still vulnerable to these potential deadly diseases.

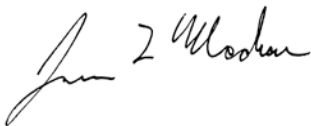
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Vaccines not only protect the child who receives them, but just as importantly, they protect the health of the community in which the child lives. A scientific study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* indicated that those who did not receive measles vaccine due to philosophical or religious reasons were 35 times more likely to contract measles, and could potentially increase the incidence of measles in their community by as much as 30 percent.¹ When vaccination levels are high, children who cannot be protected directly by the vaccines are partially protected because they are not exposed to the disease. This includes infants too young to receive vaccinations and those with medical contraindications such as a child with leukemia who cannot receive the measles vaccine

As we have unfortunately seen, recent reductions in vaccination coverage threaten to erase many years of progress as nearly-eliminated and preventable diseases return, resulting in illness, disability and death. We must stop this disturbing trend. That is why the AMA supports legislation to eliminate all non-medical exemptions from required childhood vaccines. Non-medical exemptions are a barrier to the high immunization rates necessary for herd immunity and work against the establishment of a successful vaccination program. By eliminating philosophical and religious exemptions for immunization, Oregon lawmakers can take a critical step toward ensuring Oregon children receive the necessary vaccinations to protect not only their health, but the health of others.

We urge the Oregon House of Representatives to pass H.B. 3063-B and thank you for your consideration of our views on this important issue. If you need further information, please contact Annalia Michelman, JD, Senior Legislative Attorney, AMA Advocacy Resource Center at annalia.michelman@ama-assn.org or (312) 464-4788.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James L. Madara".

James L. Madara, MD

cc: Oregon House of Representatives Members
Oregon Medical Association

¹ Daniel Salmon, Michael Haber, Eugene Gangarosa, et al., *Health Consequences of Religious and Philosophical Exemptions from Immunization Laws*, 282 JAMA 1, 47-53 (Jul. 1999).