



October 12, 2018

Dear Dr. Buehler,

During the October 9, 2018, Oregon governor's debate, the moderator inquired about your stance on vaccine-related legislation. You responded that you publicly supported parental choice to opt out for "*personal beliefs, religious beliefs, or even if they have strong alternative medical beliefs.*"

This view does not reflect the stance of the Oregon Pediatric Society (OPS) or the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). The AAP specifically recommends that state laws permitting nonmedical exemptions to school entry immunization requirements should be eliminated. Please see attached AAP Fact Sheet on immunizations.

Vaccines are safe and effective in preventing serious infectious diseases. Public health vaccine laws protect our patients and our most vulnerable community members such as young infants and immune-compromised Oregonians who cannot be vaccinated. Studies show that 95% of the community needs to be vaccinated in order to achieve community immunity.

We urge you to reconsider your position so that it is evidence-based and aligns with the medical and public health experts who develop vaccine-related recommendations and legislation.

Sincerely,

Carla McKelvey, MD, MPH
President of the Oregon Pediatric Society



Childhood Immunizations

OVERVIEW

Routine childhood immunization is one of the crown achievements in public health over the past century. A 2013 New England Journal of Medicine study estimated that childhood vaccination programs have prevented 103.1 million cases of diphtheria, hepatitis A, measles, mumps, pertussis, polio and rubella since 1924. A 2005 Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine study estimated that for every dollar spent in the US, vaccination programs saved more than \$5 in direct costs and approximately \$11 in additional costs to society.

However, challenges remain. Outbreaks of measles, pertussis, Hib, and other vaccine preventable diseases are returning. Numerous factors—including the cost of acquiring and administering vaccines, an increasingly complex delivery system, as well as a small but growing number of parents who are forgoing vaccination for their children—put success in jeopardy.



AAP POSITION

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has long supported preventive care, including immunizations, in the medical home setting as a major component of pediatric health care and disease prevention and believes economic barriers should not restrict access to immunizations or other forms of preventive care for children. The AAP works to educate the public and key decision makers about the importance of routine child immunization and actively counters misinformation about vaccine safety and efficacy.
- The AAP recommends that state laws permitting nonmedical exemptions to school entry immunization requirements should be eliminated.
- While the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) mandates insurance coverage of preventive services without copay, including immunizations, gaps in coverage remain. The AAP advocates for appropriate funding for public immunization programs, and works to promote reform of the vaccine delivery and payment system to ensure that children have access to vaccines and that administrative and financial burdens on physician practices are reduced.

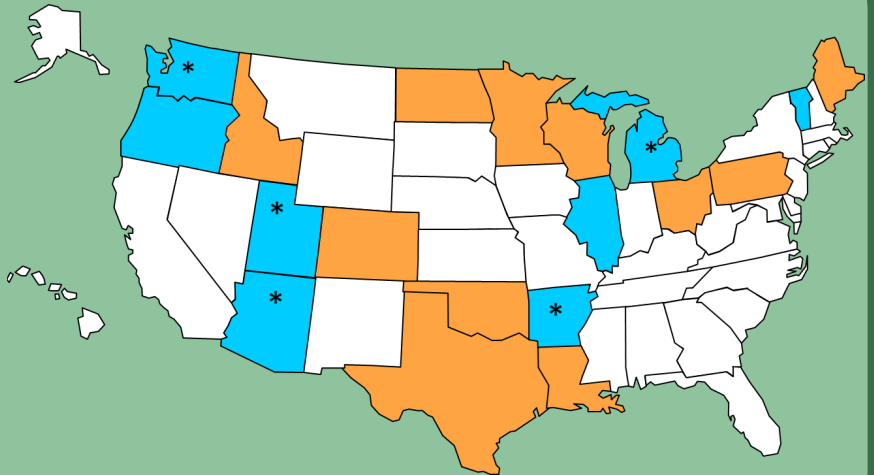
FACTS

- 70.7% of children between the ages of 19 and 35 months were immunized according to ACIP/AAP/AAFP/ACOG recommendations in 2016.
- 20,762 cases of whooping cough (pertussis) were reported in the US in 2015. A multistate outbreak of measles linked to an amusement park in California led to 188 cases in 24 states from January 1 to August 21, 2015. Most measles patients were unvaccinated against the disease. These outbreaks prompted state level reforms of nonmedical exemption policies.
- 1.8% of children entering kindergarten across the country in the 2016-2017 school year had nonmedical exemptions from immunization requirements. Of states and localities reporting, Oregon has the highest rate at 6.5%, and the District of Columbia, the lowest at 0.5%.

PROGRESS

- 16 states— laws allowing philosophical/conscientious exemptions to school entry immunization requirements
- 8 states— laws requiring risk communication to exemption applicants about vaccine preventable disease

For information on current law or pending legislation in your state, please contact AAP State Advocacy at stgov@aap.org



**Arizona, Arkansas, Michigan, Utah, and Washington have philosophical/conscientious exemption statutes and risk communication requirements. Oregon and Vermont do not have a philosophical/conscientious exemption statute, but applicants for religious exemptions must receive communication about risk of vaccine preventable disease.*

MORE

- [AAP Immunization Resources](http://www.aap.org/immunization/)—www.aap.org/immunization/
- [Combined 2017 ACIP/AAP/AAFP/ACOG immunization schedule](http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/immunization/Pages/Immunization-Schedule.aspx)—www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/immunization/Pages/Immunization-Schedule.aspx
- [AAP Policy—Medical Versus Nonmedical Immunization Exemptions for Child Care and School Attendance](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/3/e20162145)—<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/3/e20162145>
- [Child Vaccination Across America](https://immunizations.aap.org)—<https://immunizations.aap.org>