

February 25, 2020

To the Members of the House Health & Insurance Committee:

We, the undersigned organizations, write to you to express our strong opposition to House Bill 20-1239 which would implement several measures that are not based in science and instead go against current medical practice and standards.

Vaccines, according to the World Health Organization, are considered one of the most important public health interventions of the twentieth century, saving millions of lives and reducing the spread of contagious diseases. For the benefits of vaccines to be realized in a population, high coverage levels (~95%) need to be achieved. Existing state and federal laws, regulations and safety systems, based in evidence, exist to support our communities in maintaining high vaccination coverage. The provisions described in HB20-1239 are unnecessary and duplicative of what is already current federal law and standard medical practice. For instance:

- Federal law already requires that information on the benefits and risks of vaccination be given to patients before each vaccine is administered via a Vaccine Information Statement (VIS). A VIS is developed in a science-based manner which ensures patients and parents have enough information to make a truly informed decision whether to vaccinate themselves or their children.
- It is already standard medical practice for all patients to be screened for contraindications and precautions prior to vaccine administration to minimize adverse reactions. Current medical practice utilizes national standards from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for determining contraindications.
- Health care providers are already required, through federal law, to report adverse events related to vaccination. Anyone – including patients – can report a reaction or injury to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS).
- There is long-standing state and federally recognized authority for the exclusion of unvaccinated children from school during disease outbreaks. This has been upheld as a valid exercise of public health authority to protect unvaccinated children and the greater public from the spread of dangerous infectious diseases.

While this bill has been introduced under the guise of promoting vaccine safety, its substance is model legislation that has been promoted by anti-vaccine advocates in other states as a means to disseminate harmful misinformation. Deviating from the established national standards, federal laws and evidence-based medical practice in any way could lead to harmful consequences in schools and communities across Colorado.

We respectfully urge you to VOTE NO on HB20-1239 to keep Colorado in line with evidence-based national standards that promote the safety of our communities.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado Chapter
Children's Hospital Colorado
Colorado Academy of Family Physicians
Colorado Association of Local Public Health Officials
Colorado Association of School Nurses
Colorado Chapter, American College of Physicians
Colorado Children's Campaign
Colorado Community Health Network
Colorado Hospital Association
Colorado Medical Society
Colorado Parents for Vaccinated Communities
Colorado PTA
Denver Health
Every Child Pediatrics
HealthONE Hospitals / Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children
Healthier Colorado
Immunize Colorado
Interfaith Alliance of Colorado