

Elimination of Non-Medical Vaccine Exemptions in MA

Eliminate non-medical vaccine exemptions

- The College calls on states to pass legislation to eliminate any existing exemptions, except for medical reasons, from their immunization laws
- MA allows medical and non-medical (religious) vaccine exemptions
 - 4 cases of measles in MA
 - 500% increase in use of religious exemptions despite a decline in MA's religious demographics

MA Legislature

- An Act Relative to Vaccines and Public Health (H.3999)
- Coalition formed
 - American Academy of Pediatrics (Massachusetts Chapter)
 - American College of Physicians (Massachusetts Chapter)
 - Boston Globe Editorial Board
 - Center for Inquiry (Cfi)
 - Immune Deficiency Foundation (IDF)
 - Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA)
 - March of Dimes
 - Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association
 - Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers
 - Massachusetts Medical Society
 - Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
 - Massachusetts Public Health Association
 - MassKids
 - Progressive Massachusetts
 - Vaccinate Massachusetts



Calling on member action



Dear MA ACP members,

There are 2 upcoming bill hearings at the State House on issues the MA ACP Health and Public Policy Committee (HPPC) feel are very important to our members.

1) We support universal vaccination of our patients by advocating for An Act Relative to Vaccines and Public Health (H.3999), which removes the religious vaccination exemption for children entering schools in Massachusetts and it maintains medical exemptions.

2) We support our immigrant patients by advocating for An Act to Protect the Civil Rights and Safety of All Massachusetts Residents (S.1401/H.3573 Safe Communities Act), which would prevent local law enforcement from asking about a person's immigration status unless it is required by law.

Further information about these bills is listed on the MA ACP website at this link: <https://www.acponline.org/about-acp/chapters-regions/united-states/massachusetts-chapter/public-policy-advocacy> . We ask that you contact your legislators about these bills today. To make this as easy as possible, we have provided email and phone call templates on the website for each bill that you can adapt. Phone calls can be more effective than emails but any outreach to your legislator is helpful. We encourage you to include a patient story to emphasize the personal impact this bill will have on your patients. Click [HERE](#) to access the template information.

Bill Hearing – December 3, 2019



Calling on member action again



Dear MA ACP members,

Last Tuesday, December 3, 2019 was the hearing for An Act Relative to Vaccines and Public Health (H.3999), which removes the religious vaccination exemption for children entering schools in Massachusetts and it maintains medical exemptions. It was a very lengthy hearing so we were unable to testify in person, however, our Chapter has submitted written testimony in support of this bill.

The hearing involved hours of testimony from physicians, community organizations, and individuals both in support and opposition to the bill. There was an overwhelming presence of families that are against the state requiring that their children be vaccinated and they spoke of the emotional and financial toll of taking care of their children whom they felt were harmed by vaccines. They argued that MA vaccination rates are some of the highest in the country and urged to leave non-medical vaccine exemptions in place.

As internists, we believe we can demonstrate to our legislators why it is critical that all eligible people are vaccinated universally. Moreover, we can illustrate to them the personal toll infectious diseases have on our patients, communities, and health care system.

We ask that you contact the Joint Committee on Public Health to pass this bill today. The Committee is currently gathering testimony and information to make their decision in the coming weeks so your outreach must be timely. To make this as easy as possible, we have provided email and phone call templates below you can adapt. Phone calls can be more effective than emails but any outreach to these legislators is helpful. **We strongly encourage you to include a patient story to emphasize the personal impact this bill will have on your patients as this can be very influential to legislators.**

Next steps

- Opposition efforts: Health Choice 4 Action
 - Jan 14 briefing for legislators and staff:
 - “There will be an expert panel comprised of medical doctors, nurses and attorneys presenting a data-driven analysis of vaccination rates, exemptions, and “gap” populations.”
- Bill is sitting in Joint committee on Public Health, will be discharged by February 5

Acknowledgements

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- HPPC Co-Chair Dr. Aisha James
- Lynda Layer, Chapter Administrator