

HB1454

Industry, Business and Labor Committee

January 28, 2025

Jessica Doty, UND Director of Student Health Services

Dr. Marjorie Jenkins, UND VP for Health Affairs & Dean of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences

Dr. Maridee Shogren, UND Dean of the School of Nursing and Professional Disciplines

Chair Warrey and Committee Members:

This statement is written in collaboration between Jessica Doty, Director of Student Health Services, Dr. Marjorie Jenkins, Dean of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences and Dr. Maridee Shogren, Dean of the College of Nursing and Professional Disciplines at the University of North Dakota. We are writing to oppose HB1454 as this bill would eliminate the ability to require documentation of vaccinations for college students. This challenges community or herd immunity on our vibrant college campuses, an environment where students learn, live, and play in close nature daily.

UND brings students from across the state, nation and world to create a diverse learning experience and make up over 15,000 students. Documentation of vaccination requirements protect our campus from highly contagious vaccine-preventable disease occurrences, as well as promote a quick public health response to protect other community members in case of an infection through the tracking and quick identification of students' immunization status in case of an outbreak of a communicable and vaccine-preventable disease on campus. In addition, UND is educating healthcare students who are caring for people who are already ill, hospitalized or immunocompromised, and have increased susceptibility to communicable diseases. This further increases the importance of vaccine requirements for our students. Exemptions to the vaccine requirement are available to students without explaining their reason for the objection

To highlight the rapid transmission that could occur on a campus consider this example. Measles is spread through the air and 9 out of 10 non-immune people in contact with someone infected with measles can become ill. Measles hangs in the air for up to 2 hours ([cdc.gov/measles](https://www.cdc.gov/measles)).

Attending class and internships in the community, living with roommates, cheering for athletic teams, and working in clinical rotations for health sciences are all common college student behaviors. Imagine how quickly measles could spread in a dorm, college classroom, or sporting event. Being able to identify vulnerable students who may be exposed to vaccine-preventable disease is a critical reason to require vaccination records be submitted on college campuses.

Prior to 2000, measles had been declared eliminated in the United States because of strong herd immunity through the effective measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine. At the end of 2024, the [CDC reports](https://www.cdc.gov) 32 jurisdictions in the United States have experienced a measles case with

16 outbreaks. This is an increase from 4 outbreaks reports in the United States in 2023. With the increasing risk of a highly contagious disease, eliminating the ability to require vaccinations opens our university community and state of North Dakota to threat of an outbreak.

The elimination of immunization requirements would impact the learning and living of university students and adversely affect the mission of our university populations and vulnerable citizens.

We respectfully request a Do Not Pass on HB1454.