

House Bill 1505
Human Services Committee
February 7th, 2023

Good morning, Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee. My name is Kylie Hall. I currently reside in north Fargo in District 45. I have a Master's Degree in Public Health, with an emphasis in the management of infectious diseases. I have spent the last 7.5 years working on vaccine-related projects at North Dakota State University in the Center for Immunization Research and Education, where I am the currently the Operations Director. I would like to make clear that my comments today are not on behalf of North Dakota State University.

House Bill 1505 would remove childcare, school and university immunization requirements. We know that these requirements play a key role in the prevention and control of vaccine preventable diseases. In North Dakota, parents that do not want to vaccinate their children can claim an exemption to vaccination for medical, religious or philosophical reasons.

There are many jobs in North Dakota for which vaccination may be required, either by the employer or by state or federal law. This bill would do away with employer and state vaccine requirements. Vaccine requirements protect the employee, often act as a barrier against the spread of infections, and protect those the employee serves. Some examples:

- Many hospitals and long-term care facilities require influenza vaccination for employees to protect staff and patients.
- Hepatitis B vaccine is often required for staff who are high-risk for blood exposure. Blood exposure can occur in healthcare settings, but also occurs in areas like law enforcement, where the individual may be exposed to a needle while serving in the line of duty. State law also requires hepatitis B vaccination for those working in tattoo and body art facilities.
- Veterinary clinics or animal control staff may require rabies vaccination for staff, either prior to employment or following contact with a potentially rabid animal.
- Laboratory workers who regularly work with *Neisseria meningitidis* isolates should be vaccinated against meningococcal bacteria.

This law could place certain employers (ex. healthcare facilities) at odds with federal requirements for vaccination (ex. through CMS or OSHA).

Lastly, this bill could subject vaccinating parents to a charge of a class C felony. In North Dakota, 93% of kindergartners are up-to-date on their kindergarten vaccines, and a majority of parents support immunization requirements for school attendance. More than 9 in 10 parents vaccinate their children statewide. If this bill passes, requiring your children to be vaccinated could be considered a class C felony, and it would impact more than 90% of parents in the state.

Please vote “do not pass” on House Bill 1505.

Respectfully submitted,

Kylie Hall, MPH

Fargo, ND – District 45