



House Committee on Education
February 13, 2020
HB 2601
Kimber Kasitz, BSN, RN, NCSN
KSNO President

Chairman Huebert and Members of the House Committee on Education,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond on behalf of the Kansas School Nurses Organization (KSNO) in **OPPOSITION to HB 2601**.

According to the CDC, a disease is categorized as eliminated when it is no longer circulating in a specific region. Measles, rubella, mumps, diphtheria and polio have all been eliminated in the U.S., largely due to the introduction of vaccination programs in the United States, way back in the 1970's when I was a child. Elimination does not mean that the disease cannot return to the region or that live cases of the disease do not exist; the cases would originate from outside the region, often reintroduced by visitors. You may remember the 2014 outbreak of measles associated with Disneyland. The CDC classified 83% of the cases as importation-associated, meaning that the disease was carried into the U.S. by international travelers. Part of the reason for the escalation of the 2014 measles outbreak was due to "under-vaccination". According to the CDC, 74% of patient cases reported were either unvaccinated or had NO vaccination documentation available. **Vaccines** are part of what helps to move diseases from "eliminated" to "eradicated". The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that as of 2018, smallpox is the only eradicated disease, meaning it has been eliminated worldwide.

I shared historical vaccine information because the current vaccination schedule protects against many diseases that once claimed the lives of thousands each year in the United States. With the potential for the epidemiology of diseases to shift over time, new diseases to emerge, and vaccination recommendations to change, we must continue with the regulatory authority of public health experts at KDHE to determine public health risks and vaccination requirements. State immunization requirements exist to protect Kansas children from vaccine-preventable diseases which ultimately help our students to be healthy, safe and ready to learn.

State law requires schools to notify parents of immunizations their child needs by May 15th for the following school year. It is important that immunization regulations remain consistent and not expire each year after adoption to prevent delays in notifying parents about vaccine requirements for the following year and unnecessary exclusion of students.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our concerns. In Summary, as advocates for Kansas students and families, we **strongly OPPOSE HB 2601** and are in favor of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Secretary retaining the flexibility and authority to be responsive to new vaccines recommended by the ACIP as part of the routine child and adolescent vaccine schedule.

Kansas School Nurses Organization Mission Statement
Every Kansas student is healthy, safe, and ready to learn.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kimber Kasitz". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Kimber Kasitz, BSN, RN, NCSN
Director of Health Homebound & 504 Services
Wichita Public Schools – Student Support Services
President of Kansas School Nurses Association