

February 12, 2020

Dear House Education Committee:

RE: Testimony in opposition to HB 2601

I am a Board Certified Pediatrician. I work at a Rural Health Center and serve as the Hodgeman County Health Officer. I am a mother to two sons and have vaccinated them both according to the CDC immunization schedule. I highly recommend to patients and their families that we follow the schedule because these recommendations protect people from vaccine-preventable diseases.

The CDC sets the immunization schedule based on recommendations by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), which are also approved by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

Vaccine hesitancy has become a major public health threat. I care for many families who are susceptible to the strong anti-vaxx social media presence which capitalizes on preying on people's fear responses by making false associations between disorders and vaccines.

According to the January 2020 edition of *Infectious Diseases in Children*, last year there were more than 400,000 cases worldwide of measles, a vaccine-preventable virus which is both extremely contagious and has a high fatality rate. The U.S. had almost 1,300 cases — the highest number in 25 years. These measles cases could have been prevented. Unfortunately, due to these cases we are learning more about the long term consequences of measles for those who survive: it weakens the immune system, increasing susceptibility to other infections.

I urge you to allow the KDHE to continue to set the recommended mandatory vaccine schedule for our schools and not legislate this process. I believe that the health experts at KDHE need to be able to make changes as needed according to ACIP recommendations and that legislation would slow down the process down, potentially risking our children to vaccine-preventable diseases.

Sincerely,

Kristie Clark M.D.,

President-Elect Kansas Chapter AAP