



To: Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

From: Rachelle Colombo
Executive Director

Date: March 22, 2021

Re: SB 212; regarding childhood immunizations

The Kansas Medical Society appreciates the opportunity to submit comments today in opposition to the passage of SB 212, regarding childhood immunizations. Kansas physicians respect and appreciate the work and role of the legislature to enact laws ensuring the health, safety and prosperity of Kansans, as they have done with regard to childhood immunizations as regulated by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) under the Secretary.

Vaccines are safe and given to millions of children each year. Side effects are generally minor and temporary; serious reactions are very rare. The United States vaccine safety program closely and constantly monitors the safety of vaccines. Vaccinations have significantly decreased rates of vaccine-preventable diseases and are the single most impactful achievement in public health.

Current law allows the Secretary of KDHE to add or remove vaccinations from those required for schools and daycares, if medical and scientific recommendations change. This structure serves three important objectives. First, it ensures scientific evidence is the basis for vaccination schedules. Second it does not burden the department with continually reviewing immunizations with proven efficacy while still allowing them to adjust the schedule as necessary to reflect relevant data and outcomes. Finally, it protects against the politicization of medical direction implemented to improve the health and safety of Kansans. As we all know, the legislative process is unpredictable and could present serious delays in necessary action.

KMS supports the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Secretary retaining the flexibility and authority to be responsive to new vaccines as part of the routine child and adolescent vaccination schedule. The current process offers the best protection for Kansas children and adolescents.

We oppose SB 212 and respectfully request your unfavorable consideration of the measure. Thank you.