



KANSAS ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS
CARING FOR KANSANS

Phone 913.214.1117
Fax 913.815.4852
info@kafponline.org
www.kafponline.org

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Testimony: SB 212 – Prohibiting the secretary of KDHE from permanently requiring additional vaccinations to attend a child care facility or school

Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

March 22, 2021

By: Chad Johanning, MD, FAAFP, President

Chairman Hilderbrand and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify via WebEx today opposing SB 212, on behalf of the Kansas Academy of Family Physicians (KAFP). My name is Chad Johanning and I am a practicing family physician in Lawrence and President of KAFP.

It is important that the list of school vaccination requirements remain in the current KDHE administrative regulations and not codified in Kansas statutes. Nor do we believe immunization requirements should expire, once adopted, and cause an undue burden on KDHE, making them repeat the regulation process year after year. SB 212 risks Kansas' ability to respond to the best scientific recommendations for immunizations, as set forth by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to protect our children from vaccine-preventable diseases. It also undermines KDHE's mission, which is to *protect and improve the health and environment of all Kansans*.

Each quarter, ACIP reviews all available science before deciding on vaccine recommendations. ACIP recommendations inform decisions to both add *and* remove vaccines from the list of Kansas requirements. **We oppose this bill 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 vaccination schedule. The current process offers the best protection for Kansas children and adolescents.**

The current administrative process allows a *timely, evidence-based* response to changes in ACIP recommendations, both to add *and* remove vaccines from the requirements list. Listing vaccines in statute, as in SB 212, would create a needlessly cumbersome process for change, even with the provisions offered.

It is worth noting that at least 49 states have some form of a *regulatory* process, rather than a legislative process. In Kansas, minimal changes have been made to the list of school vaccination requirements in the past 41 years. The current regulation process is used only as necessary to align Kansas school requirements with the best evidence-based, scientific recommendations available.

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.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our concern. We **oppose SB 212** 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 vaccination schedule. Thank you again for this opportunity to testify on behalf of KAFP. I am happy to stand for any questions you may have, at the appropriate time.

About Kansas Academy of Family Physicians:

KAFP represents nearly 2,000 active, resident, student and life members across the state. *The mission of KAFP is to support and serve family physicians of Kansas as they advance the health of Kansans.* Quality health care and health outcomes for our patients guide our public policy work. As family physicians, we see people of all ages, both men and women, and we work with almost every type of ailment and illness that afflict our patients.

Resources:

[AAFP Letter to HHS on the 2020 National Vaccine Plan - October 24, 2019](#)

[Joint Statement from the Group of 6 Supporting the Vaccines Act - May 22, 2019](#)

[Organizational Letter to Congress Recommending Policies to Increase Immunizations - April 2019](#)

[Joint Letter to President Trump in Support of Vaccines - Feb 7, 2017](#)