

HB0087 Public Health- Immunizations- Minor Consent (Access to Vaccines Act)

Jenna DeCesaris Butler

Oppose

Honorable Members of the Committee,

I'm writing to oppose HB87 and SB135- "Access to Vaccines Act". Please consider the widespread implications of this legislation. As a Maryland parent of school-age children, I am greatly concerned.

- "Mature minor" consent laws erode parental rights and put children, parents, healthcare providers, and other institutions AT RISK.
- Minors are unlikely to know their complete and detailed personal medical history, or their family medical history. This information is essential for a healthcare provider to know before administering any vaccination.
- It opens institutions like our school systems to liability for errors such as administering the wrong injection or procedure (cnn.com/2019/09/30/health/16-students-accident-indiana/index.html)- if minors are allowed to consent, do we then have school hosted flu or HPV shot clinics?
- The age for tobacco products was just raised to 21 years old- if we don't believe that even 18 is old enough to understand the consequences of tobacco use, how can we then say that 16 is old enough to assume the responsibility of medical consent?
- Children are much more influenced by authority figures, and more susceptible to peer pressure in group settings (ie school or camp clinics)- this greatly affects their ability to give true and complete informed consent. Removing parental protection from this situation makes them extremely vulnerable to unsafe events.
- If parents are not informed of, let alone consenting to, a medical procedure (wmar2news.com/investigators/teen-given-birth-control-implant-at-school-without-parents-permission), how will they be able to watch for side effects and get appropriate medical attention if needed? If there are long term complications due to an error or the medical procedure, who is liable for that?

There are far, far too many risks associated with this legislation for it to be considered beneficial for Maryland's children. Please vote no.

Sincerely,
Jenna DeCesaris Butler

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