

Dear Delegates,

I am writing to request that you **vote no on HB87** which would allow for minor children, 16 years of age, to consent to vaccinations without parent consent. Parents must be involved in and make medical decisions for their children.

I do not believe that 16 year-old children have the maturity to make medical decisions without their parents. Minors are not responsible enough to make risk-benefit decisions. These are the same reasons that minors cannot vote, purchase alcohol or tobacco, or even get a tattoo or body piercing.

In working with young people for the past 22 years, I have become increasingly concerned about the decline in overall health and also the drastic decline in the mental health of adolescents. A recent article published in the Maryland Reporter (“Md. Youths Needing Psychiatric Care Find Long Waits”, Natalie Jones, 1/20) shows that cases of psychiatric hospitalizations of adolescents in Maryland have increased from 189 ER visits in 2010 to 838 visits in 2018. Recently, I have even started to wonder, if we shouldn’t be increasing the age at which minors can obtain a driver’s license to 18 years of age. So, consequently, it would never enter my mind to lower the age at which minors can consent to medical procedures.

I am a parent of two children who are currently 9 and 11 years old. My eleven-year-old daughter has a rare condition called Cyclical Vomiting Syndrome (CVS), which has caused her to be in the hospital for approximately 15-20 days a year for the past four years. She has a complicated medical history and has been through so much. As her parents, my husband and I continue to turn over every stone, trying to help her. We are both educated and responsible adults. However, as we now know first-hand, even adults can become overwhelmed navigating the medical system. How then, if even adults have difficulty navigating the system and considering medical consequences, can we expect a child to do this?

I do not want my children making medical decisions, including getting any shot, without me, their ultimate caregiver, involved. Parents need to know what medications and vaccinations their children are receiving in order to monitor their continued health and well being.

Please vote no on this bill and preserve parental rights in Maryland.

Sincerely,

Christie Carr
1210 Corbett Rd Monkton, MD 21111 443-421-7837