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Sent: Thursday, March 2, 2023 2:44 PM
To: Michelle Wenstrup
Subject: Support HB699

Covid-19 vaccination is far from guaranteed to protect against infection or transmission of SARS-CoV-2. Many individuals vaccinated against Covid-19 as well as many unvaccinated against it have contracted and transmitted SARS-CoV-2. The choice to be vaccinated against the disease to potentially reduce one's symptoms and risk of death should be regarded as a choice an individual has to affect their own health. Given the high risk that individuals who are vaccinated against Covid-19 have in contracting and transmitting the virus to others, taking the vaccine should not be regarded as a choice one makes in order to prevent negatively affecting the health of others. Therefore, there is no public health justification for mandating Covid-19 vaccination in the workplace.

Being vaccinated against Covid-19 cannot be compared to the widely accepted practice of being vaccinated against very damaging diseases such as polio. The polio vaccine has been around for decades and the benefit of taking it to prevent contracting the polio virus has been proven over time. Additionally, the downside of not taking the polio vaccine is much greater than any downside of taking it, unlike vaccination against Covid-19, which has been shown to reduce Covid-19 symptoms and death only in high-risk populations such as the elderly, obese, and those with compromised immune systems. Further, the use of mRNA technology for vaccination is a new phenomenon, and we are just beginning to get data on the risks of it over a large-scale population.

News articles often will stress that a small percentage of people have been injured by COVID-19 vaccines per the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), but such adverse events are severely underreported to this system. A study conducted by Elsevier Ltd. and included in the website of the National Institutes of Health (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23597717/>) reports that, "the percentage of healthcare providers aware of VAERS was 71%, with only 37% of them having identified at least one adverse event following immunization and only 17% of these indicating that they had ever reported to VAERS." A higher-than-expected percentage of young people developed myocarditis and pericarditis following COVID-19 vaccination, and given that this conclusion is based on data from VAERS, we can safely assume that the actual percentage of such adverse events in young people following COVID-19 vaccination is much higher.

Please support HB699 and prevent the State of Maryland and political subdivisions within the State from requiring proof of Covid-19 vaccination as a condition for employment.

Thank you,

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