

March 6, 2023

Delegate Josselyn Pena- Melnyk  
Chair  
House Health and Government Operations Committee

**HB 699 - State and Local Government - Proof of Vaccination for Employees and Applicants for Employment - Prohibition (Vaccination by Choice Act)**

**Position: FAVORABLE with Amendment**

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my strong support for **HB 699 - State and Local Government - Proof of Vaccination for Employees and Applicants for Employment - Prohibition (Vaccination by Choice Act)**

Unequal Access to Education:

No covid-19 vaccine and no approved exemption, then no job and no education at Maryland's public Colleges and Universities. There is no mistaking that this vaccine mandate blocks equal access to employment and taxpayer funded education at Maryland's tax-payer funded IHE's. Concerns about the disparate impact on underrepresented communities.

Ineffective Vaccines:

Covid19 Vaccines do not prevent infection or transmission. The original mandates assumed performance characteristics that available vaccines do not have (namely, prevention of infection). But the FDA was clear from Dec 2020 that the trials had NOT demonstrated protection of infection. These scientific facts are acknowledged by the CDC, the FDA, HHS, the WHO, health ministries and medical researchers around the world, and are confirmed by vaccine manufacturers. "no evidence that the vaccine prevents transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from person to person" FDA link [here](#)

Natural Immunity after COVID-19 infection seems strong against all variants of the coronavirus finding recently published in the prestigious Lancet, which cited that there have been an estimated 7-63 billion total infections and re-infections.

Low Risk from the Virus:

UMD recently acknowledged the new sub-variants of COVID-19 are not translating into severe illness for most people; statement by UMD [here](#) there are risk-benefit considerations that include age-stratification for risk and emerging data on vaccines, especially as it pertains to vaccine effectiveness against transmission and effectiveness in those with prior infection. potential net expected individual harm, proportionate public health benefit, failure of reciprocity, and wider social harms must also be considered..

Serious Risks from the Vaccine include disability and death

It is the college students, NOT the surrounding community, who bear the risks of mandated vaccination policies. These risks are real. While there may be disagreement about the degree of risk associated with these vaccines, the fact remains that there is risk. Although college students are at extremely low risk of suffering adversely from COVID-19 infection, they are at

very high risk of vaccine harms, including: Myocarditis/pericarditis, Menstrual and reproductive issues, Clotting, Strokes. The FDA's external review panel voted 16-2 against a blanket approval for boosters. Additional resources:

A study with a USM faculty coauthor estimated the risks of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines to be 1 serious adverse event per 800 vaccine recipients

Extended essay co-authored by Johns Hopkins clinician scientist Dr. Marty Makary: Covid-19 vaccine boosters for young adults: A risk-benefit assessment and five ethical arguments against mandates at universities

A recent prospective study of 301 adolescents in Thailand suggests 1 clinical myocarditis per 200 adolescent kids vaccinated with Pfizer (not counting subclinical effects). Other studies give rates around 1 in 3,000 to 1 in 6,000 for clinical myocarditis. The USM system has over 100,000 undergrads.

Multiple estimates of the frequency of vaccine induced myocarditis have appeared in the literature since 2021.

Sudden cardiac death was highlighted a possible complication of subclinical myocarditis.

Mandates are ineffective:

Cornell, Cruise ships, Antarctic Outpost and more. With actual outbreaks from mid-2021 onwards among "fully vaccinated" populations, indeed the vaccines do not stop the spread of the virus. Many examples with highly vaccinated populations experiencing outbreaks which have been reported in the media indicating strict vaccine mandates do not result in zero transmission. The fact is that many campuses had waves of infection despite high vaccination rates during the period of the system-wide mandate.

Mandates cause harm

Physical, mental, and emotional harms associated with the vaccine and the USM vaccine mandates are documented in a survey of USM parents, alumni, students, and staff. The data from this survey has been published in a USM Mandate Impact Report. The intent of the survey is to inform and affect positive change. The majority of respondents (80%) indicated they suffered physical and psychological harm resulting from the mandates. Themes included: Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Isolation, Ostracization, Vaccine Injury

Peer-reviewed publications also call attention to the wider social harms from mandates. BMJ Journal of Medical Ethics (Bardosh K, Krug A, Jamrozik E et al. COVID-19 vaccine boosters for young adults: a risk benefit assessment and ethical analysis of mandate policies at universities. December 5, 2022; [Ref](#)).

It is incumbent on Chancellor Perman and USM leadership to provide sound epidemiological and other scientific evidence for mandates and related policies. As well, it is imperative that USM leadership demonstrates transparency of their decision-making, including revelation of USM and school specific data and pre-established metrics used to inform their decisions. Proper, continuous, and verifiable evaluation using transparent data and measures is needed before making any claims to the past, current, or future use and success of USM Covid-19 Mandates.

individual USM institutions created discriminatory policies that adversely impacted the unvaccinated. Some schools have the unvaccinated and those not "up to date" sign a Risk Memorandum. Anyone refusing to sign this Risk Memorandum was barred from entering campus till at least September 2022. One of the consequences of non-compliance with policies

was losing access to paid for housing (which included losing access to their personal items, clothing, and medications), food/meal plans, and campus buildings until they could prove being back in compliance.

Sincerely,  
Sonya Karpishpan