



House Health and Government Operations Committee
March 10, 2025

House Bill 1315 – *Health Insurance – Coverage for Child Wellness Services – Immunizations*
POSITION: SUPPORT

I am a board-certified pediatrician with expertise in immunizations and public health and a resident of Prince George’s County. On behalf of the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, I ask for your support for HB1315 (Guzzone), which is scheduled to be heard in committee on Monday, March 10.

As you may be aware, the February meeting of the Centers for Disease Control’s (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) was postponed and a new date is yet to be announced. The ACIP is a committee comprised of 19 voting members who are independent medical and public health experts and are responsible for making vaccine recommendations to the CDC. The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services selects these members, who serve 4-year terms. The committee meets three times per year and is advised by various disease-specific work groups. Without the ACIP, recommendations for new or updated vaccines cannot be made to the CDC and therefore cannot be implemented. The postponement of the February meeting delays important discussions around recommendations for vaccines that prevent bacterial meningitis, human papillomavirus, and cytomegalovirus vaccines, among others.

Currently, Maryland law states, “The minimum package of child wellness services shall cover at least: (i) all visits for and costs of childhood and adolescent immunizations recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.” There is real concern that the HHS Secretary will remove certain physicians and public health experts from the ACIP and replace them with individuals who are unqualified to make decisions around the immunization schedule, compromising the integrity of this independent and expert advisory committee that has been in place since 1964. Alternatively, the ACIP may not be permitted to reconvene, or the CDC Director could decline to adopt the Committee’s recommendations.

Given the concerns about the stability of the ACIP, HB131 ensures that the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the professional organization of more than 67,000 pediatricians, would be allowed to fill a void left by ACIP should the Committee be prevented from making evidence-based recommendations or become otherwise compromised. The AAP’s Committee on Infectious Diseases is an committee comprised of experts in pediatric infectious diseases and vaccinations and is responsible for editing the AAP’s Red Book, which for 85 years has been the standard for pediatric infectious disease management. Allowing guidance from the AAP to be followed in lieu of ACIP recommendations will ensure recommended vaccinations continue to be provided based on the established child and adolescent immunization schedules that have longstanding, widespread adoption. It is critical that Maryland pediatricians, family medicine physicians, public health departments, and other providers of childhood

vaccinations continue to have clear guidance so they can advise families and protect children and adolescents from vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles, influenza, and human papillomavirus (HPV).

It is critical that the ACIP be permitted to convene, that its members maintain the existing level of expertise that qualifies them to review, analyze, discuss, and debate vaccine clinical trials and other research, and that the Committee's recommendations are adopted by the CDC for implementation. I urge you to contact federal policymakers to express your support of the ACIP and its role in providing these critical recommendations.

Finally, it is difficult to keep up with all the information in the vaccine space. Please do not hesitate to contact me, or anyone at the Maryland Chapter of the AAP, should you have questions or need information. Now more than ever, we need to work together to protect the health and wellbeing of all Marylanders.

Thank you for all you do to protect the children you have been called to serve.

For more information call:

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