
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 2009

Brief Description: Concerning exemptions from immunizations for school-age children.

Sponsors: Representatives Robinson, Johnson, Walkinshaw, Magendanz, Jinkins, Gregerson, Harris, Tarleton, Lytton, Riccelli, Cody, Tharinger, Senn, Kilduff, Stanford, Peterson, Moeller, Kagi, Takko, Moscoso, Wylie, Clibborn, Van De Wege, S. Hunt, Farrell, Pollet and Ryu.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates the philosophical or personal objection exemption from child immunization requirements.

Hearing Date: 2/17/15

Staff: Alexa Silver (786-7190).

Background:

A child's attendance at a public or private school or licensed day care center is conditioned on presenting one of the following before the first day of attendance: (1) proof of full immunization; (2) proof of the initiation of and compliance with a schedule of immunization; or (3) a certificate of exemption. The stated purpose of the law is to protect the health of the public and individuals by providing a means for the eventual achievement of full immunization of school-age children against certain vaccine-preventable diseases. The Board of Health requires vaccination against chickenpox (Varicella), diphtheria, German measles (Rubella), haemophilus influenza type B disease, hepatitis B, measles (Rubeola), mumps, pneumococcal disease, polio (Poliomyelitis), tetanus, and whooping cough (Pertussis).

A child is exempt, in whole or in part, from immunization requirements upon presentation of one of the following:

- a written certification signed by a health care practitioner that a vaccine is not advisable for the child;

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- a written certification signed by a parent or legal guardian that the signator's religious beliefs are contrary to the required immunization; or
- a written certification signed by a parent or legal guardian that the signator has either a philosophical or personal objection to immunization of the child.

Exemption forms must include a statement signed by a health care practitioner stating that he or she provided the signator with information about the benefits and risks of immunization to the child. This requirement does not apply if the parent or legal guardian demonstrates membership in a religious body or church in which the religious beliefs or teachings preclude a health care practitioner from providing medical treatment to the child. "Health care practitioner" means a licensed allopathic or osteopathic physician, naturopath, physician assistant, or advanced registered nurse practitioner.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, all states require specified vaccines for students and provide exemptions for medical reasons, all but two states grant exemptions based on religious beliefs, and 20 states grant exemptions because of personal, moral, or other beliefs.

Summary of Bill:

The exemption from immunization for a philosophical or personal objection is eliminated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.