

Letter to the Editor: Vaccine Mandates

Dick Atlee

Mount Desert Islander

March 8, 2019

<https://www.mdislander.com/opinions/letter-to-editor-vaccine-mandates>

Next Wednesday, the legislature's Education and Cultural Affairs Committee will hold a hearing on LD 798, a bill that would remove two of the three exemptions from vaccine requirements for school and other public services, thus making Maine a mandatory vaccine state.

Of the present three vaccine exemptions, the extremely restrictive medical exemption would remain, with state rules tying doctors' hands, but the religious and "philosophical" (meaning: "thinking person's") exemptions would be eliminated.

MDI's state representatives, Brian Hubbell and Genevieve MacDonald, are co-sponsors. Given that we are constantly being told that (all) vaccines are "safe and effective," and that vaccines give "herd immunity," their initial support is not surprising. But scientific studies independent of vaccine industry funding, both recent and going back decades, are raising major questions about the wisdom of such a bill. Testimony at next week's hearing will lay this out, and I hope our two representatives will pay close attention.

True healthcare is not a one-size-fits-all proposition. It entails both a risk/benefit calculation that differs for every vaccine and every individual's biology and the legal requirement of informed consent. Both of these are denied by LD 798.

Because minor outbreaks of measles are being used to drive vaccine mandates across the country, please consider the fact that Americans used to consider measles a minor annoyance, actively exposing their kids to it to "get it over with" and provide life-long immunity. The vaccine does not provide this. The herd immunity that used to be provided by 35 percent of people who were naturally immune now is said to require a 98 percent vaccination rate, and even in such communities outbreaks continue.

Measles has varied at a low rate in the United States, averaging fewer than 250 cases per year, a large proportion of whom are fully vaccinated. Not a single child has died of measles in the U.S. in 16 years.

So the "effective" claim is not settled science. How about the "safe" claim?

The scientific basis for concern about vaccine safety is immense. It would take pages of this newspaper to state it clearly. I can only present a small sample here.

The 1986 National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act (NCVIA) freed lawsuit-beleaguered vaccine manufacturers from all liability for deaths and injury caused by their products, transferring it instead to the U.S. taxpayer via a special "Vaccine Court." Despite the court's rejection of most claims by parents of injured or dead children, it has so far paid out over \$4 billion in damages.

This removal of liability removed any financial incentive on a manufacturer's part to improve vaccine safety. To fill this gap, the NCVIA put safety responsibility in the hands of Health and Human Services, requiring it to see that research was done to steadily improve vaccine safety, and to report progress on this to Congress every two years. However, HHS now acknowledges that in 30 years it has failed to do any such safety research or submit any such reports.

The Institute of Medicine has complained for years about insufficient research to determine whether or not an increasing list of commonly reported serious vaccine-related injuries are caused by vaccines. The IOM's demands that this be remedied have gone unanswered.

Because the FDA doesn't classify vaccines as drugs, pre-licensure safety testing of vaccines does not require the standard years-long, double-blind, inert-placebo-controlled trials required of drugs. As a result, the trials have failed that standard on every count. Trials last from days to a month, use non-inert placebos that by definition hide safety problems, exclude children with potential vaccine-injury-inducing health issues who will nevertheless be vaccinated, and write off deaths as not vaccine-related.

Yet despite all this, LD 798 will force the parents of every child in the state to either submit that child to injections whose risks to that particular child are not taken into account, or pull that child out of the school for which they pay taxes.

And finally, of the almost 300 vaccines currently in the pipeline, a large number are for adults. The industry has made it clear -- this isn't going to be just about kids.

I hope our representatives will keep these things in mind when considering the door that LD 798 intends to open.

Dick Atlee
Southwest Harbor