



ISSUE

Protecting Children from Infectious Disease

MMA Position

The MMA believes that all children should be vaccinated, except for those who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons. The MMA supports legislation that repeals exemptions to vaccination requirements for children in public school. We also support legislation that provides funding for outreach and education of communities that have low vaccination rates.

Background

Under current state law, children must be vaccinated to attend public school in Minnesota. However, Minnesota is one of about 15 states that allow for parents to exempt their children from immunization requirements based on their personal beliefs. Statewide, about 2 percent of children are exempted from immunization requirements. These children are concentrated in certain areas of our state. For example, about 10 percent of kindergartners in Wadena County have not received their MMR vaccine.

Last year, two pieces of legislation were considered by the Minnesota Legislature. One bill would have eliminated the personal belief exemption for vaccine requirements. Another bill would have provided funding for a grant program that supports community outreach and education about the importance of vaccines. The MMA supported both these bills, though neither were signed into law.

Talking Points

- There is no scientific evidence that suggests that vaccines are not safe. Vaccines are needed to protect some of our most vulnerable patients, including young children, those with cancer, and elderly adults.
- A significant number of people need to be vaccinated so that those who can't be vaccinated for medical reasons are protected.
- Continued education and outreach to communities that have low rates of vaccination is important in order to communicate the effectiveness and value of vaccines and combat vaccine disinformation.
- Minnesota's personal belief exemption should be repealed. This exemption puts both the individual's and public's health at risk.