



MaineHealth



State of Maine | 131st Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
Testimony of Hannah A. Hudson on behalf of Maine Immunization Coalition
April 3, 2023

In Opposition To:
LD 1228, An Act to Prohibit Certain Higher Education Institutions from Requiring Vaccines Approved Under Emergency Use Authorization for Admission or Attendance

Sponsored By: Representative Smith

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, I am Hannah Hudson, a member of the Maine Immunization Coalition and the Policy and Communications Manager at Maine Primary Care Association (MPCA). MPCA serves as the administrative home of the MIC.

The MIC is a network of associations, health care systems, and providers working to protect Maine people across their lifespan against vaccine-preventable diseases, by increasing immunization rates through information sharing and collaboration. As a statewide group, we undertake collaborative advocacy on immunization. Our efforts to promote evidence-based policies that result in improved immunization rates for children and adults in the State of Maine.

We are opposed to LD 1228. It is important to note that Maine does not require Covid-19 immunizations for school entry, and all our vaccine laws preserve valid medical exemptions.

An emergency use authorization (EUA) is a tool the FDA can use to expedite the availability of medical products, including vaccines, during a public health emergency like the COVID-19 pandemic. An EUA can only be granted when no adequate, approved, available alternatives exist, and when the known and potential benefits outweigh the potential risks. It is the job of the FDA to ensure medical products meet rigorous safety and efficacy standards, a process that can take years for what's called "full approval." Though that timeline is condensed when an EUA is granted, the FDA still upholds its strict standards. An EUA only lasts as long as the public health emergency for which it was declared.¹

¹ <https://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/vaccines/emergency-use-authorization-vaccines-explained>



Covid-19 is a serious disease. Contracting it can cause pneumonia,² chronic fatigue³, injury to organs⁴, acute respiratory distress syndrome⁵, septic shock⁶, blood clots⁷, and death⁸. Students have the right to attend school in a safe environment, especially those with medical conditions that put them at increased risk of harm in the event of an outbreak of disease.

Colleges and schools must continually assess how they balance individual liberty with their responsibility to ensure safe communities. Implementing any kind of ban undermines this authority and hinders their responsibility to protect employees and students.

MIC is happy to be available for the work session. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at hudson@mepca.org if I can answer any questions.

Hannah A. Hudson, MA
Policy and Communications Manager, MPCA

² <https://www.cdc.gov/pneumonia/causes.html>

³ <https://www.gavi.org/vaccineswork/five-things-know-about-long-covid-and-chronic-fatigue-syndrome>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/long-term-effects/index.html>

⁵ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7361309/>

⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/sepsis/what-is-sepsis.html>

⁷ <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/covid/blood>

⁸ <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#datatracker-home>