



MaineHealth



State of Maine | 131st Legislature  
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
Testimony of Hannah A. Hudson on behalf of Maine Immunization Coalition  
April 24, 2023

In Opposition To:  
**LD 59, An Act to Prohibit Inclusion of the COVID-19 Vaccine in the  
Universal Childhood Immunization Program**

Sponsored By: Representative Underwood

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Hannah Hudson, a member of the Maine Immunization Coalition (MIC) 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 promote evidence-based policies that result in improved immunization rates for children and adults in the State of Maine.

We are opposed to LD 59. The Universal Childhood Immunization Program provides all children from birth until 19 years of age in the State with access to a uniform set of vaccines as determined and periodically updated by the Maine Vaccine Board (MVB). The legislature formed the MVB in 2010 to help reinstate its universal purchase of vaccines for children. The MVB assures the necessary flow of vaccine purchase funds by collecting payments from health plans, insurance companies, and other payers and remitting the funds to the State.<sup>1</sup>

Through the Universal Childhood Immunization Program, the state purchases vaccines at favorable rates and distributes them to providers at no charge. A universal vaccine purchase policy reduces the upfront cost for stocking vaccines and has many additional economic benefits, as outlined by Maine DHHS in a report on the implementation of the Universal Childhood Immunization Program<sup>2</sup>:

- Lower costs through a public-private partnership and purchasing at reduced rates
- Lower costs by reducing parallel systems in provider offices
- Improved access by creating a single-tier system
- Improved rates by offering combination vaccines to reduce missed

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.mevaccine.org/ui#about\\_section](https://www.mevaccine.org/ui#about_section)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/immunization/providers/presentations/Universal-Childhood-Immunization-Program-Becomes-Law-in-Maine.pdf>



opportunities

- Improved rates by reducing out-of-pocket costs

Vaccines for COVID-19 are not currently included in the list of vaccines available through the program. However, if vaccines for COVID-19 were excluded from the program in the future, providers would have to privately purchase COVID-19 vaccines and seek reimbursement through other vaccine billing channels. This would place an unnecessary burden on the health care system and Mainers seeking care.

On behalf of the Maine Immunization Coalition, we urge you to oppose this bill. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at [hhudson@mepca.org](mailto:hhudson@mepca.org) if I can answer any questions.

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