



TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SB 314

March 22, 2023

Chairwoman Gossage and Members of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee,

The Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (KAAP) represents more than 450 of the practicing pediatricians in the state. The KAAP has the fundamental goal that all children and adolescents in Kansas have the opportunity to grow safe and strong. It is with this goal in mind that we want to share our testimony in strong opposition of the proposed **SB 314** that prohibits the Secretary of Health and Environment from requiring COVID-19 vaccination for children attending a child care facility or school. This is not currently a requirement; this bill is dangerous and unnecessary.

KDHE has repeatedly indicated it has no intention of requiring the COVID-19 vaccine for childcare or school attendance, similar to the flu vaccine, which is also not required. The language in this bill could too easily be amended to not require ANY vaccines.

Kansas pediatricians oppose bills that intentionally or unintentionally have a negative impact on vaccination coverage in the state. This has the potential to be detrimental not only to public health in Kansas, but specifically child health and school safety. By interfering with benign sections of statute, we are unintentionally giving a platform to misinformation about vaccines. Vaccines are safe and effective.

The legislature serves a critical function in passing laws to protect the citizens of Kansas. Decisions to change any immunization law should be held to the highest standards of evidence-based scientific deliberations. SB 314 introduces a concept that would remove the responsibility of determining health regulatory immunization policy from KDHE and opens the door for this responsibility in a more transient body subject to trends rather than science and data. This could delay the protection of Kansas' citizens from serious infectious diseases. Should vaccine recommendations change for COVID-19, it is essential to our state to be able to adapt and respond to these issues in a timely and effective manner. KDHE should maintain the ability to determine and address critical health related issues without political undermining. The Kansas Legislature should consider policies that build upon, rather than hinder immunization rates. We must continue vaccinating to protect people by lessening and eliminating disease outbreaks.

[A 2022 poll](#) revealed that **85% of Kansans agree that KDHE is the appropriate authority to set the wellness vaccine schedule.** This overwhelming support shows that current legislative



efforts to change this is out of step with what Kansans want. Immunizations are a safe, effective way to protect children and the health of all Kansans from disease.

There has been much misinformation on COVID-19, especially the vaccine. [Here](#) is a YouTube video describing how mRNA vaccines work. Even though widespread use of mRNA vaccines is new, the technology has been studied for decades. The mRNA vaccine does not contain any live or dead parts of the virus and does not interact with your DNA at all. DNA is your genetic material stored in the *nucleus* of a cell; mRNA in the vaccines *never gets into the nucleus*. Once your immune cells have used the instructions provided by mRNA, it is broken down and quickly exits the body.

Over half of all kids 12 to 17 years old in the U.S. have been fully [vaccinated](#) against COVID-19! That's over 13 million kids who have had both of their doses of COVID-19 vaccine. Almost one-fourth of all kids 5 through 11 have had at least one dose. The vaccines continue to be monitored very closely. In fact, due to the large numbers of COVID-19 vaccines administered, these vaccines will have the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. More information can be found at the American Academy of Pediatrics [HealthyChildren.org](#)

What might seem like simple adjustments to legislative and regulatory process could have real-life consequences for the health of children across the population of the state. Anything that hinders progress is a step in the wrong direction. KDHE should maintain the ability to determine and address critical health related issues without concern for politics.

On behalf of Kansas Pediatricians, we would like to express our strong opposition to SB 314 and respectfully request your NO VOTE on SB 314. We welcome any questions you might have and are happy to serve as your resource on all pediatric related issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Dena K. Hubbard, MD, FAAP
Public Policy Committee Chair
Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Vaccines are safe. Vaccines are effective. Vaccines save lives.