



February 12, 2024

The Honorable Beverly Gossage  
Chair, Kansas Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare  
Room 445-S  
State Capitol  
300 SW 10<sup>th</sup> St.  
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: Opposition to Senate Bill 391

Dear Chair Gossage and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in opposition to Senate Bill 391, which would weaken the ability of Kansas public health officials to implement and enforce protective COVID-19 vaccination policies.

The mission of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) is to cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease, and myeloma and improve the quality of life for the more than 1.3 million people in the United States living with blood cancer, and their families.

LLS urges your committee to oppose SB 391 because it would undermine evidence-based public health standards that support the well-being of those facing cancer.

At LLS, our top priority is the safety of blood cancer patients and survivors. We know they are at increased risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19. However, LLS' research shows that as many as 1 in 4 blood cancer patients may not be able to mount the same robust antibody response as healthy individuals after being vaccinated against COVID-19<sup>1</sup>, making it even more important for those around them in healthcare and educational settings to be vaccinated.

Further, higher vaccination rates mean lower hospitalization rates. That reduces strain on our healthcare system and helps to ensure that hospitals can care for patients with other, non-COVID emergencies. Since immunocompromised patients may not produce their own robust immunity, it's vital that they can count on state officials to implement and enforce high protective standards.

We all must do our part to ensure our actions keep the most vulnerable around us safe, including adults and children fighting cancer. As such, we respectfully urge your committee to protect

Office of Public Policy  
10 G St NE  
Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20002  
[www.LLS.org](http://www.LLS.org)

immunocompromised cancer patients by opposing this effort to erode the quality and effectiveness of public health standards in Kansas.

Thank you again for your deliberation on this critical healthcare issue. Please contact me at [dana.bacon@lls.org](mailto:dana.bacon@lls.org) or 612.308.0479 for further information on our position on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dana Bacon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dana" being more prominent than the last name "Bacon".

Dana Bacon  
Senior Director, State Government Affairs  
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

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<sup>1</sup> Greenberger, L.M., Saltzman, L.A., Senefeld, J.W., Johnson, P.W., DeGennaro, L.J., Nichols, G.L., Antibody response to SARS-CoV-2 vaccines in patients with hematologic malignancies, *Cancer Cell* (2021), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccell.2021.07.012>.