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December 2, 2019

The Honorable Michael Norris
New York State Assembly
8180 Main Street
Williamsville, NY 14221

Dear Assemblyman Norris,

I am writing to ask that you reject A2912 (Paulin) that would mandate immunizing all children born after January 1, 2009, for the human papillomavirus (HPV). The proposed legislation is currently in committee. The legislation is ill-conceived and if passed into law, would have a detrimental effect on many families in the Clarence Central School District. The District has received communication from a number of parents who are vehemently opposed to mandatory immunization of HPV.

HPV is spread by intimate sexual contact and therefore is not an epidemic infectious disease among school-aged children. Vaccines previously mandated for universal use are those which protect the public's health against agents easily communicated, responsible for epidemics, or causing significant morbidity or mortality among those passively exposed to the illness. HPV is not an agent in that category.

Further, the American Medical Association Journal of Ethics (January, 2007) reasons that the HPV vaccine does not meet the high threshold for mandating. According to the American Medical Association:

"Most infections are harmless, and screening methods (Pap smear and HPV testing) are available to identify individuals who are at risk of cervical cancer, which occurs 10 to 20 years following initial infection. Treatment of precursor lesions by minor surgical procedures is completely effective in preventing cervical cancer. Thus, there is no compelling public health rationale for mandating HPV vaccine in school-aged children."

The proposed legislation adds HPV to the current list of mandated immunizations for school-aged children, and decrees that schools not permit any child to be admitted or to attend school without proof of the HPV vaccination. The only options available for parents are to home school their children or move to a state without mandated immunizations. Mandating the vaccine for school-aged children and denying children admission to school if they don't comply seems particularly onerous, especially for a disease that is not communicable in the classroom and/or school environment.

I urge you not to dismiss the concerns of those worried about both the rationale for mandating HPV vaccinations and the serious governmental overreach that interferes with parental ability to make informed medical choices for their children.

Please use your influence to reject A2912.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey M. Hicks, Ed.D.
Superintendent