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Dear Kansas Lawmaker,

As the 2023 session draws to a close, we strongly urge you to reject any proposals undermining current vaccine requirements, existing vaccine exemptions, or the ability to respond quickly and effectively to future infectious disease outbreaks in our state.

The vaccine-related policies discussed throughout the 2023 legislative session[1] risk placing our state's children in child care and school settings, as well as immunocompromised adults and our seniors, at a higher risk of disease, disability, or even death. At one point, some of the proposed policies also impacted both businesses and colleges and universities.

When outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases happen, there is a severe economic impact on a community. Parents miss work, children miss school and child care, outbreaks overwhelm our health systems, and responses can cost millions of dollars[2].

During a 2018 and 2019 measles outbreak in Kansas, the public health response to the 72 known cases cost approximately \$2.3 million. Measles is very contagious. It can live in the air for up to two hours after an infected person leaves the area and 90% of exposed people will become infected if they are not vaccinated. Late last year, Ohio saw an outbreak of measles, where 80 of the 85 kids infected were not vaccinated. And, measles outbreaks usually see about 20% of infected children hospitalized. In this Ohio outbreak, 42% of the kids infected were hospitalized! That should alarm us all, as almost everyone in a community must be vaccinated against measles to stop an outbreak from occurring.

Furthermore, additional proposals[3] to remove local and state health officials' authority to respond to infectious disease outbreaks in evidence-based fashion must also be rejected. Many of the vaccine-preventable diseases that our state's vaccine requirements target are also highly infectious.

As a Kansas public health pioneer once said, "The health of each of us depends on the health of all of us."

Please reject any policies that would undermine current vaccine requirements, current vaccine exemptions, or the ability to respond quickly and effectively to future infectious disease outbreaks in our state.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Organizations and Individuals

[1] SB 20; SB 314; SB 315; and the CCR for HB 2390.

[2] Pike, J., Melnick, A., Gastañaduy, P., Kay, M. Harbison, J., Leidner, A., J., Rice, S., Asato, K., Schwartz, L., and DeBolt, C. (2021). Societal Costs of a Measles Outbreak. *Pediatrics* 147(4). <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2020-027037>

[3] SB 6; Sen. Sub for HB 2390; and the CCR for HB 2390.

### **Kansas Organizations**

Immunize Kansas Coalition  
CJS Translation Services, LLC  
Diversidad Latina  
Flint Hills Wellness Coalition  
Grant County Health Department  
Johnson County Department of Health and Environment  
Kansas Action for Children  
Kansas Association of Local Health Departments  
Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Kansas Council of Health-System Pharmacy  
Kansas Head Start Association  
Kansas Interfaith Action  
Kansas NEA  
Kansas Pharmacists Association  
Kansas School Nurse Organization  
Lincoln County Health Department  
Logan County Health Dept.  
Masonic Cancer Alliance  
McPherson County Health Department  
Nurture KC  
Pawnee County Health Department  
Pottawatomie County Health Department  
REACH Healthcare Foundation  
The University of Kansas Cancer Center  
UFCW District Union Local Two  
United Methodist Health Ministry Fund

### **National and Other State Organizations**

Health Forward Foundation  
Immune Deficiency Foundation  
Indiana Immunization Coalition  
Meningitis B Action Project  
New Mexico Immunization Coalition  
SAFE Communities Coalition  
The Arizona Partnership for Immunization  
Tulsa Area Immunization Coalition  
Vaccinate Your Family

### **Individuals**

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