



May 13, 2015

The Honorable Anne Gonzales
Chair, Health & Aging Committee
The Ohio House – 13th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Re: Senate Bill 121 – Immunizations

Dear Chairman Gonzales:

As the President of the Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio (AMCNO), an organization representing more than 5,000 physicians in the Northern Ohio region, I am writing to you to express our support of Senate Bill 121. This legislation would protect adolescents from contracting meningococcal infections by requiring meningococcal vaccinations.

Meningococcal infections are very serious and can lead to severe disability and death. The disease is most often contracted by infants and people between the ages of 16 and 21. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends all 11-12 years olds should be vaccinated with meningococcal conjugate vaccine and a booster dose should be given at age 16 years. For adolescents who receive the first dose at age 13 through 15 years, a one-time booster dose should be administered, preferably at age 16 through 18 years, before the peak in increased risk. Meningococcal vaccination is the best protection we have against this disease.

Senate Bill 121 would require the Ohio Department of Health to specify an age at which students should be immunized against meningococcal disease and would put a meningococcal vaccination requirement in place for students beginning in the 2016 school year.

The AMCNO physician members support this new immunization requirement and we ask for your support of Senate Bill 121.

Sincerely,

Matthew E. Levy, MD

President

Cc: Members of the House Health and Aging Committee

The Voice of Physicians in Northern Ohio