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April 23, 2018

The Honorable Steve Huffman, MD, Chair
Ohio House Health Committee
77 S. High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

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Dear Chairman Huffman and Members of the House Health Committee:

On behalf of the over 5,000 family physician, family medicine resident and medical student members of the Ohio Academy of Family Physicians, I write to express our strong support for House Bill 559, a bill that will protect children and save lives through strengthening Ohio's immunization laws.

The bill makes important changes to Ohio's current law by helping strike a better balance between parental rights and the overall health and well-being of Ohio's children by establishing a standard form for all school districts to use and requiring that a physician or other licensed healthcare professional sign the form for all required immunizations for Kindergarten, school entry, and grades 7 and 12.

Ex Officio

AAFP Delegate to AMA
Colette R. Willins, MD, Westlake

Those conversations with a healthcare professional are essential to parents having all the appropriate medical and scientific information prior to making health care decisions about immunizing their children. Having that opportunity to ask questions and receive verbal information, will boost Ohio's immunization rates and keep Ohio's children safe and healthy.

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In addition, the bill streamlines how data regarding immunizations is handled and reported so public health officials, parents of immune-comprised children, and other stakeholders will know the opt-out rate at each school building.

Immunizations are one of the most significant healthcare achievements in history. They are safe, effective, and supported by the vast majority of parents and voters. Please support HB 559.

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Sincerely,

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