



October 5, 2021

Chairman Dick Stein  
Commerce and Labor Committee  
Ohio House of Representatives

RE: Opposition to HB 435

Chairman Stein, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the Commerce and Labor Committee:

Thank you for allowing Nationwide Children's Hospital to submit written testimony in opposition to HB 435, which creates new exemptions to requirements for the COVID-19 vaccine and limits employers' rights to establish policies for the health and safety of patients, students, customers, and employees.

Nationwide Children's Hospital strongly supports immunizations and urges all who are eligible be fully vaccinated. Vaccines have a robust and long track record of safety and efficacy for a variety of devastating infectious diseases such as polio, measles, whooping cough, meningitis, and now COVID-19. The evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates that vaccines are safe and effective. The Nationwide Children's COVID-19 vaccination website contains information on the COVID-19 vaccines and locations for vaccination. For more information click [here](#).

Nationwide Children's Hospital has six defined, guiding ideals that we call our "One Team Values." One of these values is prioritizing quality and safety. As an employer with over 14,000 staff, we are obligated to create a safe space for our employees, patients, and community. We must be able to set employment expectations and manage our workforce to preserve a safe work environment, especially as we adapt to the challenges of the pandemic.

At Nationwide Children's Hospital, because nearly 70% of our patients are ineligible for the COVID-19 vaccine, employee vaccination and other infection prevention strategies are critical to protecting our extremely vulnerable population. Other strategies in place for the safety of our patients and staff include pre-visit screening, physical distancing requirements, COVID-19 testing, masking, eye protection, other personal protective equipment requirements, and specialized cleaning protocols.

All employees of Nationwide Children's Hospital must be vaccinated against COVID-19, with the exception of those individuals with an approved medical, pregnancy/breastfeeding, or religious exemption. Those employees who are not in compliance are not eligible for an annual merit raise. Employees who chose not to be vaccinated are not terminated, but we may change their work responsibilities in an effort to limit the spread of infection.

Our mission is to achieve the best health outcomes for the children we serve, a challenging goal in the current environment. We urge the committee to oppose HB 435, so all Ohio employers preserve the ability to make decisions in the best interest of those they serve.

Lorina Wise, JD  
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Nationwide Children's Hospital