



Opponent Testimony SB 144
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Chair Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Provider Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in opposition to Senate Bill 144.

The Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio (AMCNO), founded in 1824, is the region's professional medical association and the oldest professional association in Ohio. We are a nonprofit 501(c)6 representing more than 6,700 physicians and medical students from all the contiguous counties in Northern Ohio.

The AMCNO has been proud to champion vaccination efforts in the state of Ohio and appreciate that the statehouse is taking the issue of vaccination rates seriously. However, we have some concerns about the potential ramifications of SB 144, particularly as it pertains to childhood vaccines and routine pediatric care.

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are incredibly valuable healthcare professionals that we recognize as partners in caring for our patients. Their role as frontline providers during the COVID-19 pandemic and importance in protecting our communities against illnesses like the flu cannot be overstated. While we deeply trust these fellow healthcare professionals' capabilities, our concern is that SB 144 may inadvertently de-emphasize the importance of regular, pediatric well-child visits by removing the vaccination prescription requirement from current law.

Well-child appointments are critical tools of preventative care that allow physicians to monitor the health and development of children and intervene if issues arise. Like the American Academy of Pediatrics, an organization to which many of our own members also belong, our worry is that parents may skip well-child visits and get their routine vaccines from a pharmacist, missing the other important screenings that come from pediatric visits.

Childhood vaccinations and routine pediatric care were massively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Particularly with children born during the pandemic now aging into the school system,

we believe it is more important than ever that their care, including vaccinations, is managed by a physician who can monitor the entire well-being of the child.

Additionally, it is our belief that lagging vaccination rates among Ohio's children stem from hesitancy and a lack of education about vaccines among parents. SB 144 would not address hesitancy. We believe that regular well-child visits provide opportunities for physicians to engage and education parents and help assuage any vaccine concerns they may have.

We urge the committee to consider the impact this legislation could have on the overall health of children and the importance of encouraging well-child visits. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.