



June 14, 2021

Chairman Lipps
Vice Chair Holmes
Ranking Member Russo
Members of the House Health Committee
Reference: Testimony on House Bill 248 (HB-248)

My name is Nana-Hawa Yayah Jones, MD. I am a practicing pediatrician and endocrinologist at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center.

I stand in opposition to HB-248, a bill that will threaten the health and well-being of Ohioans.

I have devoted my professional life to caring for children in the clinical setting and working to reduce health inequities in children and their families across communities. Over the years, I have treated many children and young adults with chronic illness (mostly type 1 and type 2 diabetes mellitus). Diabetes is the 3rd most common pediatric chronic disease. The administration of vaccines in these high-risk youths have prevented co-morbid disease and infection that has prevented death and demise in our most vulnerable population. Preventing infectious disease through vaccination is not an option, it must be a public health mandate.

Vaccines and public health measures like masking represent some of the safest and most effective strategies we must keep our children and communities healthy. Due to these strategies, children now live to adulthood, free from infectious diseases which previously caused widespread death. Moreover, in the case of COVID-19, these strategies are bringing the promise of the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, a scourge that has killed nearly 20,000 Ohioans.

The science is clear with study after study underscoring the degree to which benefit of vaccines outweighs the risk. In contrast, HB-248 will result in a greater frequency of preventable diseases and associated morbidity and mortality in youth.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opposition to this bill.

Sincerely,

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