

**HB 248: To Prohibit Required Vaccination Status**  
**Proponent Testimony: William P Sawyer, MD**  
**Ohio House Health Committee**  
**June 17, 2021**

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I appreciate the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 248. I am gravely concerned there has not been enough focus on hand hygiene behaviors in our schools and Public Health framework that protects us from the devastation of many preventable diseases. HB 248 does not decimate our progress in public health in the past century and it could potentially go further in our efforts to fight communicable diseases in the years to come by recommending more intentional emphasis on hand hygiene behavior education in schools, Public Health, daycares and businesses. In the past 20 years the emphasis of teaching hand hygiene behaviors in school has almost disappeared which may be linked to underfunding of school nurses and staffing. I have observed this as I created Henry the Hand Foundation to teach the 4 Principles of Hand Awareness in an intentional method for the classroom and schools which was successful in early 2000's but has waned in the past 15 years in the schools. 2009 H1N1 Pandemic there was a SIGNIFICANT emphasis on hand hygiene and was very effective. But by 2010 you did not hear about hand hygiene in the media nor was it emphasized in school settings, hence faded away. And now with COVID-19 many are afraid that hand hygiene behavior education will fade away again. And this past year "No Flu" demonstrated the efficacy of the non-pharmaceutical interventions can have on Public Health.

Vaccines are a direct contributor to economic gains of the pharmaceutical industry specifically. And there is no accountability to the manufacturers for liability of complications from vaccines. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) established the Clean Hands Coalition in 2003 to promote "Clean hands prevent disease and save lives". I know because I am a founding member and still coordinate the monthly calls, but CDC dropped off several years ago for an unknown reason and they could not come up with funding for the initiative. Studies by CDC researchers have found that in a typical flu season, influenza imposes an estimated \$87.1 billion economic burden on the country, and health care facilities requiring flu vaccinations among their employees can reduce patients' risk of contracting influenza or influenza-like illness by 42%, not even a 50% reduction. And the employer mandated flu vaccination strategy is significantly less than the non-pharmaceutical intervention strategies that resulted in virtually no flu in 2020-21 which is testimonial to the non-pharmaceutical intervention success that should be promoted annually for better outcomes over flu vaccination mandates.

Yes, certain vaccinations provide critical protection for infants, young children, and immunocompromised individuals, but there are many that have been developed that are not as critical as they have been promoted to be. We have incorrectly come to view vaccinations as the single source solution to prevent infections, instead of intentionally teaching good hand hygiene behaviors as a life skill that benefit our personal health and community for their protection every single day. And we have left good hand hygiene behaviors to chance instead of intentionality which would help us live our daily lives largely safe from many diseases that can spread through the population unchecked. We cannot afford to risk weakening that protection with HB 248. Vaccination mandates without clear presentation of mandate exemptions do take away our reliance on our personal physician's recommendations which are based on our health status and risk factors.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns, and once again, I urge the committee to support HB 248 to keep Ohioans safe and avoid dangerous consequences for the people of Ohio.

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