

Michelle Cotterman, RN CNHP  
Proponent Testimony Sub House Bill 248  
House Health Committee  
*August 24, 2021*

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Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and Honorable Members of the House Health Committee thank you for considering my testimony in support of Sub HB 248.

My name is Michelle Cotterman. I am a registered nurse. I have been in practice for 14 years. At the beginning of this pandemic myself and my peers were considered “essential frontline workers”. We drove to work in the early morning hours with curfew permission slips in our bags when the rest of the world was ordered to stay home. We took care of our patients with the same dedication, care, and professionalism we always had. We were told to reuse our personal protective equipment. We were told we were “healthcare heroes”. Fast forward to today and we are now faced with an ultimatum, accept an emergency use authorized, for-profit, liability-free pharmaceutical product or face termination. Many of us have natural immunity from the exposures that occurred from working closely with patients. Scientists from the Cleveland Clinic have found that individuals previously infected with SARS-CoV-2 do not receive additional benefit from vaccination<sup>1</sup> because we are already immune. Our employers are not asking for proof of immunity but rather proof of compliance with product consumption. As nurses, we are first and foremost patient advocates. We are trained in the ethical principle of autonomy, that each person has the right to self determination and that as nurses we must continue to advocate for the wishes of our patients even when the medical team disagrees. What we are asking for with Sub HB 248, is that our autonomy be protected and preserved by law.

I am a mother of two beautiful and perfectly healthy naturally raised children. We are a pharmaceutical-free family and we live our lives according to the dictates of our own conscience. I am concerned about the future of my sovereign children. I am concerned by the discrimination facing our young adults as they face their years in university. I am wondering if my children will have a place there or even if they will be considered hireable based on their pharmaceutical consumption history. What I am asking for with Sub HB 248, is that their autonomy be protected and preserved by law.

I am a certified natural health professional. Everyday I watch and wait for our public health departments to suggest even the most basic health promoting advice. A CDC study released in early March 2021 found that 8 in 10 people with severe COVID-19 outcomes including those hospitalized on a ventilator and even death were overweight or obese.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, studies have found that overweight or obese individuals have diminished immune response to vaccination.<sup>3</sup> Studies have shown that vitamin D deficiency is associated with COVID-19

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<sup>1</sup> Shrestha, N. K. (2021, June 19). Necessity of COVID-19 vaccination in previously infected individuals. Retrieved August 17, 2021, from <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.06.01.21258176v3>

<sup>2</sup> Kompaniyets, L. (2021b, March 11). Body Mass Index and Risk for COVID-19–Related Hospitalization, Intensive Care Unit Admission, Invasive Mechanical Ventilation, and Death — United States, March–December 2020.

Retrieved August 17, 2021, from [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7010e4.htm?s\\_cid=mm7010e4\\_x](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7010e4.htm?s_cid=mm7010e4_x)  
<sup>3</sup> COVID-19 Vaccines: Special Considerations for the Obese Population. (2021, April 8). Retrieved August 17, 2021, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8029603/#CR13>

morbidity and mortality.<sup>4</sup> Studies have shown that vaccinated individuals who become infected will still transmit the virus to others.<sup>5</sup> Yet to date, I have not heard any Governor or health department promote healthy lifestyle through diet, exercise, rest, hydration, weight loss or focused supplementation. They are all pushing a one-size-fits-all narrative that the vaccine that has diminished returns in the most vulnerable amongst us will save the day. What I am asking for with Sub HB 248, is that the autonomy of all individuals be protected and preserved under the law.

Thank you for your consideration, I urge you to vote “YES” on Sub HB 248.

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<sup>4</sup> Jain, A. (2020b, November 19). Analysis of vitamin D level among asymptomatic and critically ill COVID-19 patients and its correlation with inflammatory markers. Retrieved August 17, 2021, from <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-77093-z>

<sup>5</sup> Brown, C. M. (2021, August 6). Outbreak of SARS-CoV-2 Infections, Including COVID-19 Vaccine Breakthrough Infections, Associated with Large Public Gatherings — Barnstable County, Massachusetts, July 2021. Retrieved August 17, 2021, from [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7031e2.htm?s\\_cid=mm7031e2\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7031e2.htm?s_cid=mm7031e2_w)