

# Leading Medical Organizations Endorse Strong School and Childcare Vaccination Requirements *and* Elimination of Non-Medical Exemptions

School and childcare immunization requirements ([www.immunize.org/official-guidance/state-policies/requirements](http://www.immunize.org/official-guidance/state-policies/requirements)) are central to efforts to ensure high vaccination rates for our nation's children. Having a highly vaccinated population protects not only the children who receive vaccines, but also infants who are too young to be vaccinated, other children who cannot be vaccinated due to certain medical conditions, and other people in the community at risk of severe illness if exposed to vaccine-preventable infections.

Allowing exemptions to school- and childcare-required vaccinations ([www.immunize.org/official-guidance/state-policies/exemptions](http://www.immunize.org/official-guidance/state-policies/exemptions)) that are non-medical (e.g., religious or philosophical) erodes vaccination rates and increases the risk of community outbreaks. Recognizing the benefits and safety of vaccines for children and the risk of disease outbreaks when vaccine exemption rates increase, the following medical, nursing, and public health organizations oppose states' policies allowing exemptions that are non-medical.

**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS (AAFP)** supports immunization of infants, children, adolescents, and adults consistent with recommendations set forth in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and approved by the AAFP. "With the exception of policies which allow for exemption from required vaccination for a medical contraindication, the AAFP does not support other immunization exemption policies. Clinicians should approve a medical exemption from vaccination only for a bona fide medical contraindication. The AAFP believes that vaccination requirements for school entry are important for the health of the public and supports the science of vaccine safety." (*Board of Directors [BOD], September 2015; December 2024*)

**LINK:** <https://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/immunization-exemptions.html#Immunization%20Exemptions>

**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS (AAP)** The Academy "supports laws and regulatory measures that require certification of immunization to attend child care and school; supports medically indicated exemptions to specific immunizations as determined for each student; recommends all states and the District of Columbia use their public health authority to eliminate non-medical exemptions from immunization requirements." *Committee on Practice and Ambulatory Medicine, Committee on Infectious Diseases, Committee on State Government Affairs, Council on School Health, Section on Administration and Practice Management, September 2016; reaffirmed February 2022*

**LINK:** <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2016-2145>

**AMERICAN COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNCOLOGISTS (ACOG)** recognizes that "non-medical exemptions from immunizations – personal, philosophical or religious – endanger the health of the exempted and other individuals, communities, and our nation. ACOG opposes non-medical exemptions from state immunization requirements and urges ob-gyns to educate and encourage patients to get immunized." *Board of Directors, June 2019; July 2022*

**LINK:** [www.acog.org/clinical-information/policy-and-position-statements/statements-of-policy/2022/vaccines-and-nonmedical-exemptions](http://www.acog.org/clinical-information/policy-and-position-statements/statements-of-policy/2022/vaccines-and-nonmedical-exemptions)

**AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS (ACP)** "The American College of Physicians calls on states to pass legislation to eliminate any existing exemptions, except for clear medical contraindications, from their immunization laws." *Board of Regents, September 14, 2021*

**LINK:** [www.assets.acponline.org/acp\\_policy/policies/position\\_statement\\_on\\_immunization\\_policies\\_to\\_protect\\_the\\_public\\_sept\\_2021.pdf](http://www.assets.acponline.org/acp_policy/policies/position_statement_on_immunization_policies_to_protect_the_public_sept_2021.pdf)

**AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (AMA)** "The AMA strongly supports efforts to eliminate nonmedical exemptions from immunization, and will continue to actively urge policymakers to do so." *Press Release; June 13, 2019*

**LINK:** [www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/ama-policy-advocates-eliminate-non-medical-vaccine-exemptions](http://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/ama-policy-advocates-eliminate-non-medical-vaccine-exemptions)

**AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION (ANA)** states "ANA does not support any exemption from immunization other than for medical contraindications. All requests for medical exemption from vaccination should be accompanied by documentation from the appropriate authority to support the request." *ANA Position Statement, July 22, 2020; May 9, 2023*

**LINK:** <https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/nursing-excellence/official-position-statements/id/immunizations/>

**INFECTIOUS DISEASES SOCIETY OF AMERICA (IDSA)** recommends that "states should eliminate exemptions to immunization mandates based on non-medical indications, because intentionally unvaccinated individuals pose an unacceptable danger to the public." *Board of Directors, June 23, 2012*

**LINK:** [www.idsociety.org/globalassets/idsa/policy--advocacy/current\\_top-ics\\_and\\_issues/immunizations\\_and\\_vaccines/statements/O62312-idsa-policy-statement-on-state-immunization-mandates.pdf](http://www.idsociety.org/globalassets/idsa/policy--advocacy/current_top-ics_and_issues/immunizations_and_vaccines/statements/O62312-idsa-policy-statement-on-state-immunization-mandates.pdf)

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY & CITY HEALTH OFFICIALS (NACCHO)** "advocates for policies that reduce or eliminate religious and philosophical exemptions from [school and child care] requirements." *Board of Directors, February 2016; July 2019*

**LINK:** [www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/16-01-School-and-Child-Care-Immunization-Requirements.pdf](http://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/16-01-School-and-Child-Care-Immunization-Requirements.pdf)

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PEDIATRIC NURSE PRACTITIONERS (NAPNAP)** "To ensure that all pediatric populations are protected against vaccine-preventable illness and remain healthy, NAPNAP affirms that pediatric-focused APRNs and other pediatric health care providers must...lead policy change initiatives in states that currently permit personal exemptions for school entry." *Executive Board, December 14, 2021*

**LINK:** [www.jpeds.org/article/S0891-5245\(22\)00091-8/pdf](http://www.jpeds.org/article/S0891-5245(22)00091-8/pdf)

**PEDIATRIC INFECTIOUS DISEASES SOCIETY (PIDS)**, "whose membership constitutes individuals dedicated to the treatment, control, and eradication of infectious diseases in children, opposes legislation or regulations that would allow children to be exempted from school and childcare immunization requirements based on their parents' personal or religious beliefs (non-medical exemptions). Exemptions from school and childcare requirements can lead to outbreaks of disease." *October 2020*

**LINK:** [https://pids.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Pediatric\\_Infectious\\_Diseases\\_Society\\_Position\\_on\\_Non.pdf](https://pids.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Pediatric_Infectious_Diseases_Society_Position_on_Non.pdf)

**SOCIETY FOR HEALTHCARE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF AMERICA (SHEA)** "strongly endorses robustly enforced immunization requirements for all attendees and staff of childcare and education facilities . . . Only recognized medical contraindications documented by a clinician should be accepted as a reason for not receiving recommended immunizations." *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology, Vol. 42, Issue 1, January 2021*

**LINK:** <https://doi.org/10.1017/ice.2020.342>

