

Parliamentary Submission to the Health and Community Services Committee regarding the Public Health (Exclusion of Unvaccinated Children from Child Care) Amendment Bill 2013:

Dear members of the committee,

I write to you as a believer in the benefits of vaccination and with great concern for the measures proposed in this bill.

To give providers of child care and pre-school education the right to deny children beneficial early childhood education based on parents religious and conscientious objection to vaccination could prove dangerous to many children and to the success of vaccination programs.

There seems to be a lack of consensus among medical providers as to what constitutes a medical exemption to vaccination. Some doctors seem to play down the risks of vaccinating mildly ill children, or those with a family history of auto-immune disease, seizures of any kind etc. while others suggest that a child should be 100% well before receiving any vaccination. In areas of Queensland where medical services are limited, pressure on parents to follow the schedule to the letter could result in a less cautious approach and a subsequent increase in adverse events. These adverse events are not always mild and include febrile convulsions and anaphylaxis. In rare cases, babies can die from receiving routine vaccination.

There is also very good evidence of vaccine adjuvants triggering auto-immune reactions in some cases (1,2). Until we are sure of which children are susceptible to these scenarios, as well as undertake a proper study of rates of allergic, auto-immune and neurological disorders in vaccinated vs. unvaccinated populations, it would be unwise and costly to use this kind of coercion to increase uptake of vaccination.

There is no evidence that unvaccinated children are a risk to the health of those that have been vaccinated. On the contrary, those who have received vaccines made with live attenuated viruses (e.g. MMR, Varicella) often shed viruses in their mucus and pose possible risk to unvaccinated children as well as those who are immuno-compromised.

Current scientific evidence shows that recent outbreaks of whooping cough have nothing to do with conscientious objectors to vaccination. Rather it shows that the low efficacy of the acellular vaccine itself is entirely to blame (3). Cocooning programs that involve vaccinating parents to prevent passing infection to their babies have been dropped in Australia because they do not achieve the desired outcomes. Why should families be punished for refusing a product that does not even work as it is supposed to?

Is the committee aware that the MMRV (measles, mumps, rubella, varicella) vaccine recently approved for use in 18 month olds is associated with a two-fold increase of febrile convulsions when compared with offering MMR and Varicella vaccines

separately? It was for this reason that the ACIP (US advisory body on vaccine practices) withdrew its recommendation for the use of the MMRV in place of the two separate shots. Why, then, should we be coerced into following a more dangerous schedule?

If this proposed legislation is passed, and child care providers exercise their right of refusal, rather than resulting in parents letting go of their reservations about the safety of the current program, it could result in clustering of unvaccinated children, depriving them of local herd immunity and increasing the likelihood of outbreaks.

Leeway needs to be made for parents to adopt their own approach to the schedule and for us all to be able to exercise a freedom to select from the best medical advice. Dr Bob Sears in “The Vaccine Book” argues the benefits of spacing out vaccines and these options should be available to Queensland families without the threat of discrimination.

The recent NSW legislation, with its emphasis on parent education, is a much more sensible option to pursue as it requires vaccination status to be recorded without allowing room for discrimination against those who have opted out. This would also allow health authorities to adequately monitor the role of unvaccinated children in possible outbreaks of infectious disease.

Yours sincerely,

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1. Shaw, Chris and Tomijanovic, Lucija (2012) *Mechanisms of aluminum adjuvant toxicity and autoimmunity in pediatric populations*. *Lupus*. Here:

<http://lup.sagepub.com/content/21/2/223>

2. Shoenfeld, Yehuda (2012) *ASIA - Autoimmune (Auto-Inflammatory) Syndrome Induced by Adjuvant: A New Syndrome to be Defined*. Here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf8sw3n7xrE>

3.

<http://discovermagazine.com/2013/jan-feb/82-whooping-cough-makes-a-comeback#.Ud6vqzubf-Z>