



July 24, 2025

As medical and community health organizations, professionals, and parents dedicated to supporting and protecting health in West Virginia, our organizations thank the West Virginia legislature for maintaining our state's childcare and school immunization policy that does not allow non-medical exemptions, and we commend the West Virginia Board of Education for continuing to follow West Virginia State Code.

We jointly issue this statement to underscore the importance of maintaining high rates of routine childhood immunizations, especially in our school and childcare settings where children spend the majority of their days in close contact with many other students, teachers, coaches, and others.

When immunization rates are high enough within communities to meet needed thresholds, that helps disrupt the spread of certain deadly yet preventable diseases. West Virginia's childcare and school immunization policy as written in State Code includes exemptions for medical reasons. This policy, which does not allow non-medical (such as philosophical or religious) exemptions, plays an essential role in maintaining high immunization rates, ensuring that our kids and communities are as protected as possible from 10 deadly yet preventable diseases.

Any decreases in the rates of immunizations, including decreases from adding non-medical exemptions to the policy, opens the door for infectious diseases to return and more easily spread. Diseases threaten many freedoms, such as for immunocompromised children (for example, kids with diabetes or undergoing cancer treatments) to attend their local schools and babies to enter childcare without increased risk of lifelong health consequences or even death.

West Virginia's childcare and school immunization requirements as outlined in State Code are widely recognized for leading the nation, and the policy has demonstrated its pivotal role for decades in protecting our children, schools, and communities.

Our organizations remain committed to working with families and communities to protect children from preventable diseases in the Mountain State.

Sincerely,

West Virginia Academy of Family Physicians
WV Chapter of the American College of Osteopathic
Family Physicians
West Virginia Immunization Network
West Virginia State Medical Association

WV Chapter- American Academy of Pediatrics
West Virginia Association of School Nurses
WV Children's Hospital Collaborative
West Virginia Nurses Association
West Virginia Osteopathic Medical Association