Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the
Maryland Senate
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
Public Health – Human Papillomavirus Vaccine – Information and Informed Consent
(SB 783)
February 26, 2019

SUPPORT

Maryland PTA is the state’s oldest and largest child advocacy organization that serves as a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. We represent thousands of volunteer members in 900 public schools and we are comprised of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. For nearly 104 years, our mission has been to make every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

Maryland PTA submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill 783, Public Health – Human Papillomavirus Vaccine – Information and Informed Consent. This bill requires that a health care provider provide information outlining the potential risks and benefits of receiving the human papillomavirus vaccine (HPV) before administering the vaccine. Also, it requires that each recipient of the HPV—or a recipient’s parent in the case of minors—provide written consent attesting to having been informed of both the vaccine’s potential risks and benefits. Lastly, SB 783 prohibits a health care provider acting in good faith from being held liable for providing vaccine information to patients or for reporting a patient suffering from vaccine side effects to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System.

Maryland PTA supports child health and in tandem supports parent, family and community education that includes research and awareness of issues that may affect children’s health and welfare. Maryland PTA also supports the dissemination of information surrounding issues potentially impacting child health and welfare. The Association believes that in order to fulfill the responsibility of offering educational opportunities to all children and fulfilling our mission “to make every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families to advocate for all children”, we need to recognize and deal with potential health issues as they may impact children and the schools and communities that serve them.

While Maryland PTA supports vaccination of school-aged children and believes that vaccination is often an effective means for preventing potentially serious/fatal illness, we also believe that a risk/benefit analysis is useful. Such an analysis should be based on informed consent that allows decision-making to take into account all potential risks and benefits before authorizing any medical decision, especially medical decisions affecting children. Considering that there were over 41,000 reports of adverse-reactions of the papillomavirus vaccine to the national Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System, including 226 deaths, between 2006 (the year that the papillomavirus vaccine was approved for use in the U.S.) and 2015, both the effectiveness and the risks of the human papillomavirus vaccine are still not fully known. Because the HPV is most often administered to 11-12-year-old girls, who are minors, there is a heightened need for informed consent and decision-making surrounding its utilization.

For the reasons stated above, Maryland PTA supports Senate Bill 783 and recommends a favorable report.

Testimony is presented on the behalf of

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