



## POSITION STATEMENT

### School and Child Care Immunization Requirements

School and child care immunization requirements are effective public health tools for increasing immunization coverage in children, preventing vaccine-preventable disease, and preventing transmission of disease in school and child care settings. However, the Association of Immunization Managers advocates the following requisites:

- 1. School and child care immunization requirements must be used sparingly, approached cautiously, and considered only after an appropriate vaccine implementation period.** This vaccine implementation period is critical to ensure that the necessary elements are in place to support a school/child care requirement, including
  - Coverage for the vaccine in private health insurance plans
  - Sufficient funding to purchase the vaccine through Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, Section 317 program, and/or state program to provide access to those not adequately covered by private insurance
  - Physician/provider support for the vaccine
  - Public acceptance of the vaccine
  - Stable and adequate vaccine supply
  - Addition of vaccine to immunization information systems (registries)
  - Adequate data to assure vaccine safety
  - Significant uptake in the recommended population to reduce the compliance burden on the school/child care system
- 2. Vaccine mandates must be evaluated carefully, including their epidemiologic, economic, and ethical concerns.**<sup>1</sup> Inappropriate application of mandates risks loss of support for immunization programs and reversal of policy and program gains.
- 3. School and child care requirements for any vaccine must be pursued through existing state processes. Legislators, advocates, consumer groups, manufacturers, and others interested in pursuing school and child care immunization requirements should first contact the state health agency immunization program.** Most states have a process in place to add new vaccines to existing school requirement laws and regulations. The process is designed to ensure a thorough evaluation of all the relevant issues and may involve advisory committee

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<sup>1</sup> Feudtner C, Marcuse EK. Ethics and Immunization Policy: Promoting dialogue to sustain consensus. *Pediatrics* 2001;107:1158-1164.

review, risk/benefit analysis, public comment, input from partners and vaccine providers, and consideration of related information and data.

4. **Measures to add or alter exemptions to immunization requirement laws and regulations for school and child care must be carefully coordinated with state immunization policy and goals.** Most states allow religious exemptions from childhood immunization requirements, and all states allow medical exemptions. Only a minority of states allow philosophic or personal exemptions. Opening existing law or regulations for this purpose risks having an effective mandate weakened, altered in an undesirable way, or even revoked entirely.