

TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST

L.D. 881, Resolve, To Ensure the Health of Maine Children by Requiring a Certain Vaccination

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
Room 209, Cross State Office Building
9:00 a.m., Monday, March 30, 2009

Good morning Senator Brannigan, Representative Perry, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. I am Kellie Miller, Director of Public Health Policy of the Maine Medical Association (MMA), a professional organization representing more than 3000 physicians, residents, and medical students whose mission is “*to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine citizens,*” speaking Neither for Nor Against, *LD 881, Resolve To Ensure the Health of Maine Children by Requiring a Certain Vaccination.*

This bill is the latest in a series of bills before the Maine legislature mandating additional vaccines for school entry. The value of childhood immunizations is perhaps the single greatest public health accomplishment of the last century. However, the rise in the number of recommended childhood vaccines and their cost has increased dramatically since 1980:

1980 = 4 vaccines at a total cost of \$59

1996 = 7 vaccines at a total cost of \$429

2000 = 8 vaccines at a total cost of \$707

2006 = 13 vaccines at a total cost of \$1,661 (Females) (or 12 vaccines for boys at \$1,301)

We feel very strongly that in these days of limited funding and increased accountability, we must work on the following challenges:

- 1) re-establishing a Universal state for childhood immunizations to at least provide all the school-mandated vaccines for free to all children,

- 2) fund public education about vaccines,
- 3) employ a strategic public health policy process that carefully studies criteria and balances all the factors, and lastly,
- 4) move to adding mandates based on sound criteria.

To take each of these mandates individually doesn't provide us with the accountability that we need to ensure that we are "globally" incorporating the most effective public health measures throughout Maine.

We look forward to continuing our work with the Maine Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and interested stakeholders to improve our childhood vaccination rates in the state of Maine.

Thank you.