

**RESOLUTION  
ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Board of Health  
INITIATED BY



Marie-Noel Sandoval  
DRAFTED BY

Board of Health  
SUBMITTED BY

September 24, 2019  
DATE DRAFTED

**REQUESTING THE WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE  
END THE USE OF PERSONAL CONVICTION WAIVERS  
FOR SCHOOL AND DAY CARE CENTER IMMUNIZATIONS**

1 **WHEREAS**, there are multiple important and potentially dangerous communicable diseases that are  
2 preventable by vaccinations currently required by Wisconsin law for school and day care attendance; and,  
3

4 **WHEREAS**, vaccine-preventable diseases can be very contagious, and can result in serious health  
5 complications, including pneumonia and encephalitis, and lead to death; and,  
6

7 **WHEREAS**, the effectiveness and safety of vaccines have been well established; and,  
8

9 **WHEREAS**, the Affordable Care Act has improved insurance coverage for vaccinations, which are  
10 readily available in medical offices and pharmacies, and public health departments continue to serve those  
11 eligible for the Vaccines for Children Program; and,  
12

13 **WHEREAS**, all states require certain vaccines for school entry in order to  
14 a) assure that individual children do not contract disease in the social setting of school,  
15 b) protect other students from being at risk of disease and death from exposure to an individual  
16 student, and  
17 c) protect the broader community from these serious illnesses, including individuals who are  
18 immunocompromised and those who cannot receive vaccines for *bona fide* medical reasons; and,  
19

20 **WHEREAS**, Wisconsin's immunization law Wis. Stat. § 252.04(3), Wis. Admin. Code § DHS 144.06,  
21 makes Wisconsin one of only 16 states that permits parents to opt out or waive some or all of the  
22 vaccinations required to attend school or group day care based on their personal beliefs; and,  
23

24 **WHEREAS**, Wisconsin's percentage of students with religious and medical waivers have remained  
25 relatively constant over the past decade at less than 1%, but the percentage of students with a personal  
26 conviction waiver in Wisconsin increased from 1.2% during the 1997-98 school year to an alarming 4.6%  
27 during 2018-19; and,  
28

29 **WHEREAS**, outbreaks of measles have impacted multiple states in 2019, and a number of other serious  
30 vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks have occurred in Wisconsin over the past 2 decades; and,  
31

32 **WHEREAS**, several other states have recently removed personal belief exemptions from their legal  
33 codes, such that 34 states now prohibit the use of personal belief exemptions for school and daycare  
34 immunizations; and,  
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36 **WHEREAS**, the Wisconsin Public Health Association (WPHA) and the Wisconsin Association of Local  
37 Health Departments and Boards (WALHDAB) both support a change in school and day care center  
38 immunization law that eliminates personal conviction waivers for students in Wisconsin public and  
39 private schools and for children who attend group day cares.  
40

41 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Rock County Board of Supervisors duly assembled  
42 this 10<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2019 respectfully requests that the Wisconsin Legislature end the  
43 use of personal conviction waivers for school and day care center immunization requirements.  
44

45 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Governor of Wisconsin,  
46 Wisconsin state legislators, WPHA, WALHDAB, Wisconsin Counties Association, and other  
47 organizations as appropriate.

19-10A-336

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Respectfully submitted,

**Board of Health**

Lou Peer  
Lou Peer, Chair

Connie Winter  
Connie Winter, DDS, Vice Chair

Craig Gramke  
Craig Gramke

Dave Homan  
Dave Homan

Danette Rynes  
Danette Rynes

Eric Gresens, RPh

Kaitlyn Meyers  
Kaitlyn Meyers, DVM, MPH

Vijaya Somaraju  
Vijaya Somaraju, MD, MPH, FACP

Judy Wade, WHNP

FISCAL NOTE:

No fiscal impact

Sherry Oja  
Sherry Oja  
Finance Director

LEGAL NOTE:

The County Board is authorized to take this action pursuant to §§ 59.01 & 59.51, Wis. Stats.

Richard Greenlee  
Richard Greenlee  
Corporation Counsel

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:

Matter of Policy.

Josh Smith  
Josh Smith  
County Administrator

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**Executive Summary**

Vaccines are one of the greatest public health achievements that have saved millions of lives by preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Unfortunately, over the past 20 years, Wisconsin's vaccine opt out rate has been increasing and is 5 times higher today than it was 20 years ago. The decreasing immunization rate among Wisconsin children is especially concerning to public health officials as more than 1,000 cases of measles have been confirmed in 2019 – the highest number on record in the U.S. since 1994 and since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) declared measles to be eliminated in 2000 thanks to the MMR vaccine. The measles outbreak is a public health crisis and should be concerning to Wisconsin residents because measles outbreaks have been confirmed in neighboring states (Illinois, Michigan, and Iowa), and only four other states had higher rates of non-medical exemptions for the MMR vaccine last school year than Wisconsin. More than half of the states in the U.S. have had measles outbreaks this year.

Every state requires children to be up-to-date on the vaccines recommended by the CDC to enroll in school or childcare. Children who are allergic to a vaccine ingredient or who have damaged immune systems can get a medical exemption. Thanks to a principle called herd immunity, healthy people can make up for poor immune systems by creating a buffer of vaccinated people around them. Although specific goals vary by disease, the World Health Organization and others aim for 90 to 95 percent vaccine coverage to keep herd immunity strong. Many Wisconsin schools are trending toward, or have dropped below, 95 percent and even 90 percent coverage.

Data from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services shows a growing number of families are opting out of vaccinations required to attend school by using a "personal conviction" waiver. Wisconsin is one of only 16 states to allow personal conviction waivers. Vaccine waivers have become more frequent over the last two decades. Figures from the Wisconsin health department show that in the 1997-98 school year, 1.6 percent of students had an exemption to vaccination. That jumped to 4.8 percent in 2016-17.