

MICHIGAN FAMILY FORUM
Sound Public Policy for Stronger Michigan Families

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Michigan Family Forum Statement on HPV Vaccine Mandate

LANSING, Mich. - Michigan Family Forum is opposed to legislation or executive orders requiring 6th grade girls to receive the HPV vaccine in order to enroll in school. HPV is a sexually transmitted disease which can lead to cervical cancer. "Childhood vaccine requirements are intended to protect the public health from diseases that are easily communicable in day-to-day contact and to prevent illnesses which may deprive children of their right to receive a free, public education" said Brad Snavely, executive director.

The organization has consistently supported the manufacturer's right to market the vaccine. More importantly, however, Michigan Family Forum believes every parent should have an opportunity to review information about the vaccine and make an informed decision for their child. "We think the vaccine has the potential to help many women and we fully support parents, physicians and young women making informed choices on this medical decision," said Snavely. "What we do not support is the state engaging in heavy-handed tactics to force parents into making medical decisions which they might not otherwise make for their child at this young age." Testing indicates that the vaccine is equally effective when girls are older and better able to participate in the decision themselves.

The state, in conjunction with pharmaceutical companies, may choose to market and pay for a vaccine for those who want it. However, to mandate the vaccine as a condition of school enrollment and require the families or their insurance providers to incur the \$360 price tag is an unnecessary intrusion in a family's healthcare decisions. "We are concerned with the precedent this would set and wonder where this action will lead us," Snavely said.

The Michigan Department of Community Health states that cervical cancer is nearly 100 percent preventable and curable with regular pap tests and prompt treatment for irregular results. Michigan Family Forum strongly encourages women to protect their health with regular check-ups and to get the HPV vaccine if they decide that it is appropriate for them.

For more information, visit our website at www.michiganfamily.org and click on the "Talking Points" link for the HPV vaccine.

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