

Dear Chairman MacDonald and members of the Committee on Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs,

My name is Ashleigh Shenton. I am a resident physician in my third year of Internal Medicine training at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, and I live in Lebanon. I am testifying in opposition of HB524, repealing the New Hampshire vaccine association.

Vaccines are an essential element of healthcare, preventing debilitating disease in vulnerable patients. Many of the patients with risk factors for severe infection with preventable disease - such as pneumococcal pneumonia, varicella, and Haemophilus - are the same patients who also are at risk of socioeconomic insecurity. In my primary care practice, I have seen higher compliance with vaccines when there is not a financial barrier to obtaining them. If patients are expected to go through insurance - which may have high out of pocket copays - for all vaccines, there will be decreased ability to be vaccinated. This could lead to preventable morbidity and mortality on the individual and on the population levels. For this reason, I believe that the New Hampshire vaccine association is necessary in ensuring that all New Hampshire residents have access to the care they need. I am advocating, as a primary care physician, against its repeal.

Thank you for your time and attention on this important subject.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ashleigh Shenton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "A" and a long, sweeping tail.

Ashleigh Shenton, MD