

March 18, 2025

**RE: Testimony Opposing HB524 to Abolish the New Hampshire Vaccine Association**

Dear Honorable and Esteemed Members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Dr. Everett Lamm and I am a seasoned pediatrician with 25 years of experience in community-based practice and public health. Most of my career has been dedicated to serving the Seacoast, during which time I have been honored as a perennial New Hampshire Magazine Top Doctor and a CDC award recipient. I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB524 which proposes to abolish the New Hampshire Vaccine Association (NHVA). The NHVA is a highly successful, cost-saving, joint public-private venture, whose achievements have been made possible through decades of legislative foresight, medical ingenuity, and corporate responsibility.

As a pediatrician, my primary responsibility is to safeguard the health and well-being of children. The NHVA has been a cornerstone of celebrated public health in the state, ensuring that all children, regardless of their family's financial situation, have access to life-saving vaccines. This program has been instrumental in preventing outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, protecting the most vulnerable members of our communities, and maintaining high vaccination rates that are overwhelmingly favored by the silent majority.

The NHVA operates as a nonprofit organization that pools funds from insurers to purchase vaccines at a significant discount—up to 30% lower than market prices. This cost-saving mechanism not only benefits healthcare providers, health plans, and state agencies alike, but also ensures that vaccines are readily available at primary care practices, where families feel most comfortable seeking care for their infants, children, and adolescents. In its 23+ years of operation, the NHVA has yielded nearly \$100 million dollars in health care cost savings. Not only has the program saved the state significant sums of money, but it has also contributed to New Hampshire's consistently top in the nation ranking for childhood health.

If the NHVA is abolished, the consequences will be far-reaching and result in:

1. **Increased Costs for Providers and Families:** Without the NHVA, individual healthcare providers will bear the financial burden of independently purchasing vaccines upfront, storing them, and navigating complex reimbursement processes. This will disproportionately impact small practices and rural clinics, potentially forcing them to stop offering care altogether. Families will face higher out-of-pocket costs and significantly reduced access to the practices and vaccines of their choosing.
2. **Lower Immunization Rates:** The logistical and financial barriers created by this bill will inevitably lead to lower immunization rates. This places our children, grandchildren, and elderly at risk of outbreaks of preventable diseases like measles, whooping cough, polio, and influenza—diseases that we have worked tirelessly to control for nearly 75 years.

3. **Public Health Risks:** High vaccination rates are critical for maintaining herd immunity, which protects those who cannot be vaccinated, such as infants and individuals with compromised immune systems. Dismantling the NHVA threatens this delicate balance and endangers public health.

It is important to note that the NHVA does not mandate vaccinations or set vaccine policies. Its method are no secret as its Board has always been devoted to transparency, fairness and integrity through its adherence to right to know principles and responsible governance. Since inception, this organization strives to make every bit of information from minutes, agendas, financials, etc., easily accessible to anyone who is interested, from legislators to laymen alike. As you carefully consider the legislation before you, I urge you to please review the success of this time-honored program for yourself; I am certain you too will find it exemplary. It simply ensures that vaccines are available to those who choose for themselves to vaccinate their loved ones. This program respects parental choice while upholding the public health infrastructure that benefits us all.

In conclusion, the NHVA, which was the first of its kind, is a proven, cost-effective solution that has well-served New Hampshire's residents for over two decades. Eliminating it would jeopardize the health of our children and the well-being of our communities. As legislators, you have the unique ability to champion this essential, cost-saving measure and ensure that no family unnecessarily endures the pain of losing a child to a preventable disease resulting from lost access to affordably-sourced immunizations. I urge you to vote against HB524 and to continue supporting the NHVA as a vital, home-grown resource. Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Respectfully,

Everett Lamm, MD, MCHDS, FAAP

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