



WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE FAMILIES FOR VACCINES

In Opposition to HB 1616-FN

An Act Prohibiting State Agencies and Political Subdivisions from Advertising or Expending Funds to Advertise Vaccines in the State of New Hampshire

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

Dear Chairwoman Layon and Members of the Committee,

We submit this testimony on behalf of New Hampshire Families for Vaccines (NHFV), a statewide coalition of families, clinicians, and advocates who support evidence-based public health policy and work to protect children and communities from preventable disease. **NHFV respectfully opposes HB 1616-FN.**

HB 1616-FN would prohibit state agencies and political subdivisions from advertising vaccines or expending funds to do so, including through third-party contractors. While the bill is framed as a limitation on advertising, its effect would be far broader. It would significantly restrict the ability of state and local agencies to communicate timely, accurate, and practical information about vaccination to the public.

Vaccine communication by public health agencies is not commercial advertising. It is a core public health function. State and local agencies use communication to inform residents about disease risks, vaccine availability, eligibility changes, outbreak response, seasonal vaccination timing, and where and how to access care. HB 1616-FN would interfere with these essential activities, regardless of context or public health need.

Clear and proactive communication is particularly important for routine and preventive care. Vaccines prevent diseases that can cause serious illness, long-term disability, and death. Measles and mumps can cause deafness and brain damage. Polio can cause paralysis. Hepatitis B can lead to chronic liver disease and liver cancer. HPV causes multiple cancers, including cervical, head and neck, and reproductive cancers in men and women. Preventing these outcomes depends not only on vaccine availability, but also on public awareness and understanding.

The bill's fiscal note underscores these concerns. The Department of Health and Human Services estimates an immediate reduction of \$61,000 in federal immunization grant spending tied to education and contracted services. More significantly, the Department warns that restricting vaccine education and communication could place up to \$3.5 million in federal immunization funding at risk if New Hampshire is unable to meet grant requirements related to outreach and education. These funds support provider education, surveillance, and disease prevention efforts across the state.

The fiscal note also notes that, as vaccination rates decrease over time, the likelihood of disease outbreaks increases. The estimated cost to manage a single outbreak ranges from \$100,000 to \$350,000, with the possibility of multiple outbreaks per year. While the long-term fiscal impact is described as indeterminable, the potential risks to public health and state resources are clearly identified.

Public health should not be treated as a zero-sum exercise. State agencies routinely communicate about multiple aspects of preventive care, including chronic disease prevention, environmental health, and injury prevention. Communicating about vaccines does not detract from other health priorities; it supports them. Infectious diseases often cause or worsen chronic conditions, and preventing infection reduces long-term health burdens on individuals, families, and the health care system.

Finally, NHFV is concerned about the broader impact of HB 1616-FN on public trust and access to care. Parents, caregivers, schools, and health care providers rely on accurate information from trusted public sources. Prohibiting state and local agencies from communicating about vaccines creates gaps that are easily filled by confusion and misinformation, making it harder for families to make informed decisions and for communities to prevent disease.

For these reasons, New Hampshire Families for Vaccines respectfully urges the Committee to vote Inexpedient to Legislate on HB 1616-FN and to preserve the ability of state and local agencies to communicate effectively about vaccination as part of their responsibility to protect public health.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Victoria Shaheen
Founder, New Hampshire Families for Vaccines