



## WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF AMERICAN 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

Wednesday, January 14, 2026

Dear Chairwoman Layon and Members of the Committee,

I am pleased to submit testimony on behalf of American Families for Vaccines (AFV), a national organization that advocates for policies that protect the health and well-being of children and communities based on reliable science and broad public support.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to HB 1616-FN, which would prohibit New Hampshire state agencies from advertising vaccines or expending funds to do so, including through third-party contractors. Although framed as a restriction on advertising, the bill would significantly limit essential public health communication. **AFV respectfully opposes HB 1616-FN.**

This bill poses a direct threat to public health safety.

Vaccine-related communications from state agencies are not commercial advertising; they are crucial public health tools. These communications promote routine immunizations, notify communities about outbreak-related clinics, inform families and providers of schedule or eligibility changes, and support outreach to vulnerable populations. They are critical to both outbreak prevention and response.

Families rely on these communications, along with healthcare providers, to make informed health decisions. Limiting access to timely public health information, especially during emergencies, creates confusion and increases the risk of misinformation. A 2025 KFF poll found that 66% of parents trust their local health department for vaccine information. Silencing public health agencies risks undermining that trust.

Additionally, this bill will undermine families' ability to make informed decisions regarding vaccines. If state agencies are restricted from informing the public about

disease outbreaks, vaccine availability, and prevention strategies, families will lack the resources they need to make informed choices. These impacts will be felt most acutely by populations without regular access to primary care.

These communications are especially important as outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases increase. In New Hampshire, pertussis cases rose from 7 in 2023 to more than 69 in 2024. Vaccination remains the most effective protection, particularly for young children.

HB 1616-FN would weaken the state's ability to prevent and respond to outbreaks. Early detection and response depend on agencies being able to inform the public about disease risks and vaccination availability. State agencies play a critical role in informing the public about disease risks and vaccine availability. Restricting this communication will likely lead to more frequent and larger outbreaks, particularly among people at higher risk of serious illness, including infants, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems due to medical conditions such as cancer or organ transplantation. This will also place an increased burden on healthcare providers, effectively making them the primary source of information on outbreaks and vaccination, creating a disparity for those without access to primary care.

Restricting vaccine communication risks increasing long-term health burdens and financial costs. Vaccine-preventable diseases, including flu and meningococcal meningitis, can cause chronic illness that increases our health care costs and results in lost time at work or school. The Department of Health and Human Services warns that up to \$3.5 million in federal funding tied to immunization outreach could be at risk. Outbreak response costs range from \$100,000 to \$350,000 per outbreak.

For these reasons, AFV respectfully urges the committee to oppose HB 1616-FN.

Northe Saunders, President

American Families for Vaccines + American Families for Vaccines Action Fund