

Vermont Chapter

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VERMONT ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS

To: Chair Wood and Members of the House Human Services Committee
From: Stephanie Winters, Deputy Director, Vermont Medical Society
Executive Director, American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter, and Vermont
Academy of Family Physicians
Date: January 6, 2026
RE: Support for H.545 – An act relating to Immunization Recommendations

The Vermont Medical Society, American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter, and the Vermont Academy of Family Physicians strongly support H. 545 as it allows Vermont to uphold evidence-based medical recommendations regarding vaccines and ensure Vermont specific responsiveness.

This bill aligns with trusted national bodies—such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Physicians, as well as the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)—while allowing Vermont to respond more nimbly to emerging public health needs.

The bill does the following:

1. Provides Clarity and Consistency for Health Care Professionals and Patients

Practitioners across Vermont report increasing confusion among themselves and their patients about immunization recommendations, coverage, and where vaccines should be obtained. This confusion will only increase with the announcement yesterday regarding changes to the pediatric immunization schedule, with some only now recommended for high risk populations or after “shared decision making.” H.545 establishes clear statutory authority for the Commissioner of Health to issue immunization recommendations, creating a single, consistent framework.

2. Protects Health Care Professionals Acting in Good Faith

Practitioners increasingly face legal uncertainty as immunization recommendations rapidly evolve. H.545 provides essential civil and administrative liability protection for licensed health care professionals who act in accordance with official recommendations. This protection supports high-quality care, reduces defensive practice, and allows our health professionals to focus on patient-centered decision-making.

3. Strengthens the Medical Home and Care Coordination

We support expanded access to immunizations, including through standing orders and team-based care models. This bill continues to enable pharmacists and other licensed professionals to administer vaccines within their scope, while preserving the medical home as the central point for care coordination.

This approach expands access without fragmenting care or undermining continuity, particularly for children, older adults, and patients with complex medical needs.

4. Preserves Universal, No-Cost Access to Recommended Immunizations

H.545 reinforces Vermont's long-standing commitment to universal access to immunizations without cost-sharing. From our perspective, financial barriers are a significant and preventable obstacle to preventive care and ensuring vaccines remain free at the point of care supports equitable access, improves public health outcomes, and reduces downstream health care costs. We understand that there is additional language regarding insurance coverage for the Department of Financial Regulation and support this approach, as well.

5. Supports Stable Vaccine Supply and Reduces Administrative Burden

Vermont's universal vaccine purchasing program has been critical to the success of immunization delivery in clinical practices. By allowing the Department of Health to purchase vaccines from either the Centers for Disease Control or another vendor, this bill increases flexibility and supply stability.

For practices, this reduces administrative complexity and financial risk, allowing clinicians and staff to focus on patient care.

6. Ensures Clinical Expertise Remains Central to Immunization Policy

H.545 strengthens the role of the Vermont Immunization Advisory Council and ensures continued physician and health care professional representation, including pediatric and family medicine perspectives. Along with following national guidance, we do have a lot of expertise in VT including pediatric infectious disease and the Vermont Vaccine Testing Center researchers as well.

We believe immunization policy must be informed by those who deliver care across the lifespan and understand real-world implementation challenges. This bill appropriately centers clinical expertise in public health decision-making.

In conclusion, H.545 provides clarity, protects health professionals who provide immunizations, strengthens prevention, and preserves patient access—while maintaining Vermont's commitment to evidence-based, clinician informed public health policy.

The Vermont Medical Society, American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter and the Vermont Academy of Family Physicians strongly support its passage.

Recent Statements by VMS, AAPVT & VTAFP on Immunizations:

- [Vermont Clinicians Reaffirm Unwavering Commitment to Evidence - Based Medicine](#) - January 6, 2026
- [Vermont Medical Society Joins State Agencies in Confirming Access to the COVID-19 Vaccine this Fall](#) - September 19, 2025
- [Vermont Physician Organizations Decry Termination of Federal Immunization Committee Members](#) - June 10, 2025
- [Vermont Medical Organizations Reaffirm Commitment to Providing Patients with Honest, Accurate, Science-Based Information](#) - April 15, 2025
- [Call to Prioritize Evidence and Science When Considering Cabinet Appointees](#) - November 26, 2024