



ASSOCIATION OF IMMUNIZATION MANAGERS

September 6, 2012

The Honorable Edmund G. “Jerry” Brown Jr.
Office of the Governor
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

The Association of Immunization Managers, representing 64 federally-funded state, local and territorial immunization programs, urges you to sign AB 2109 – legislation relating to immunization exemptions in California schools.

This bill addresses serious public health concerns over significant increases in unvaccinated children enrolled in California’s schools. Under this legislation, parents or legal guardians who choose an exemption for their child would need to sign a form along with their licensed health care provider stating that the parent or guardian has been informed of the risks and benefits of vaccination as well as the risks of not vaccinating their child. The bill does not prevent parents from choosing an exemption, but seeks to make sure that parents understand the risks and benefits of vaccination and are not choosing exemption out of convenience.

Persistent increases in personal belief exemptions leading to decreases in immunization rates in California’s schools will result in outbreaks of diseases like measles, mumps, and pertussis (whooping cough) to the detriment of the child, the school and the wider community. Research shows that states with easy-to-obtain exemptions have higher rates of pertussis than states with additional administrative procedures in their exemption process.¹ This is especially concerning for those individuals who are unable to be vaccinated or are especially vulnerable to vaccine preventable disease like infants and those with compromised immune systems. In 2010, 10 infants died from pertussis in California.

Escalating rates of personal belief exemptions in California schools can also have a negative economic impact on the state. Personal belief exemptions are estimated to increase societal costs of a vaccine preventable disease like pertussis by 50%.²

AIM believes that the passage of AB 2109 will address the substantial concerns about lower immunization rates and increasing numbers of vaccine preventable disease in California’s schools, while still supporting parents’ rights to express their personal objections to vaccination for their children. We urge you to protect the lives of Californians and sign the bill.

Sincerely,



Claire Hannan, MPH
Executive Director

¹ Omer SB, et al. Nonmedical Exemptions to School Immunization Requirements – Secular Trends and Association of State Policies With Pertussis Incidence. *JAMA* 2006; 1757-1763.

² Wells KB, Omer SB. The financial impact of a state adopting a personal/philosophical belief exemption policy: Modeling the cost of pertussis disease in infants, children and adolescents. *Vaccine* 2012; 5901-5904.