Minnesota Medical Association

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Dear Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Medical Association (MMA), we write to express our support for SF 3439, which would limit exemptions from immunization against measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) in childcare and school settings.

Vaccination remains one of the most effective public health interventions in modern medicine. Routine immunizations have dramatically reduced the burden of infectious diseases and continue to play a critical role in protecting the health of Minnesotans.

Recent data from the Minnesota Department of Health show that Minnesota's vaccination rates for MMR continue to trend downward. Reporting indicates that only about 87 percent of Minnesota kindergarteners have received the recommended two doses of the MMR vaccine. Public health experts estimate that approximately 95 percent vaccination coverage is needed to maintain community immunity and prevent outbreaks.

As a result, Minnesota now ranks fourth lowest in the nation for kindergarten MMR vaccination rates, ahead of only Idaho, Alaska, and Wisconsin. Even modest declines in vaccination coverage can significantly increase the risk of outbreaks of highly contagious diseases such as measles, particularly in schools and childcare settings where close contact is common. SF 3439 addresses this public health concern by limiting the use of the conscientious exemption for immunization against MMR in school and childcare settings. These diseases can cause serious complications, including pneumonia, encephalitis, permanent disability, and death.

The American Medical Association has emphasized that vaccination with the MMR vaccine is the most effective way to prevent measles and protect communities from outbreaks. Policies that support high immunization coverage are essential to protecting vulnerable individuals, including infants and those who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons. Minnesota has long been recognized as a leader in health care. Strengthening protections against MMR will help ensure that our state continues to safeguard the health of children, families, and communities. On behalf of the MMA, I urge your support for SF 3439.

Sincerely,

Lisa R. Mattson MD

Lisa Mattson, MD
President, Minnesota Medical Association