



# THE COMMUNITY IMMUNITY ACT SD.1499 / HD. 2403

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The COVID-19 pandemic continues to reveal tremendous gaps in Massachusetts' public health infrastructure, many of which predated this crisis. The Community Immunity Act is a comprehensive legislative solution to achieving localized herd immunity statewide against deadly yet preventable diseases and reducing vaccine hesitancy in Massachusetts. This bill achieves this mission through standardizing immunizations policy in our Commonwealth's educational institutions; facilitating robust data collection to assess gaps in statewide vaccine delivery; and supporting local interventions in communities lacking herd immunity against deadly yet preventable disease.

## The Problem in Massachusetts:



MA does not have localized herd immunity across the state for many immunizable diseases.



The Department of Public Health (DPH) lacks complete data on immunization rates in daycare centers, K-12 schools, summer camps, and colleges because data reporting is neither standardized nor mandatory.



Currently, overburdened school administrators are charged with processing vaccine exemption requests, a process that should be managed and monitored by public health professionals.



There is no requirement to notify parents and guardians if immunization rates drop low enough at a school or program to put their children at increased risk of contracting disease.

This bill will promote and support localized herd immunity statewide through:

### 1. SUPPORTING STUDENT HEALTH

Creating consistent baseline immunization policy across Massachusetts schools, preschools, daycare centers, and summer camps.

### 2. DATA COLLECTION FOR IMPROVED PUBLIC HEALTH

Identifying local gaps in vaccination rates to inform targeted community interventions.

### 3. FAMILY NOTIFICATION AND OUTREACH

Supporting every Massachusetts community in reducing vaccine hesitancy and achieving localized herd immunity.

#CommunityImmunityAct



\*Currently, data reporting to the Department of Public Health (DPH) on immunization rates at daycare centers, schools, colleges, and summer camps is inconsistent statewide and entirely voluntary. As a result, we do not even know the full landscape of immunization rates across the state.

### \*Massachusetts by the Numbers

<p><i>In the 2019-2020 school year,</i></p> <p><b>451</b> middle schools</p> <p><b>520</b> kindergarten programs, and</p> <p><b>1,677</b> daycares/preschools</p> <p><i>failed to report any immunization data to the MA DPH.</i></p>	<p><i>Of the kindergarten programs that submitted data to DPH in 2019-20,</i></p> <p><b>145</b> kindergarten programs are below herd immunity rates for measles.</p> <p><b>119</b> kindergarten programs are below herd immunity rates for pertussis.</p> <p><b>71</b> programs reported at least 10% of students are missing one or more vaccines required for school, without an approved exemption.</p>
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## Components of the Community Immunity Act:

### 1. SUPPORT STUDENT HEALTH

#### CONSISTENT IMMUNIZATION POLICY ACROSS MA SCHOOLS



- Provides Massachusetts' schools, daycares, and camps with a standardized immunizations exemptions process, administered through the Department of Public Health (DPH)
- Puts religious and medical exemption management in the hands of public health professionals instead of overburdened school administrators
- Allows for private schools, daycares, and camps to set more stringent requirements for immunization exemption criteria
- Allows mature minors, capable of consenting to medical treatment, to access routine and safe preventative medical procedures, such as vaccination

### 2. DATA COLLECTION FOR IMPROVED PUBLIC HEALTH

#### IDENTIFY LOCAL GAPS IN VACCINATION RATES TO INFORM TARGETED COMMUNITY INTERVENTIONS



- Authorizes DPH to collect and share immunization rate data during any public health emergency
- Fills gaps in vaccination rate data currently missing from over 2,600 Massachusetts programs

### 3. FAMILY NOTIFICATION AND OUTREACH

#### HELP EVERY MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY REDUCE VACCINE HESITANCY AND ACHIEVE LOCALIZED HERD IMMUNITY



- Authorizes DPH to conduct culturally relevant outreach in communities lacking herd immunity against deadly yet preventable diseases
- Supports the families of immunocompromised children in selecting the safest programs for their kids