



**ACTION ALERT ON S1071 / A260 WHICH PROVIDES FOR CONSCIENTIOUS EXEMPTION TO MANDATORY IMMUNIZATIONS.**

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To All New Jersey Pediatricians:

**AAP NJ NEEDS YOUR HELP TODAY!** Anti-immunization advocacy groups are swiftly promoting legislative action on New Jersey State Senate bill **S1071** and Assembly bill **A260**, which will provide conscientious exemptions (in addition to the existing medical and religious exemptions) from specific mandatory immunizations. Under current law, the State requires certain immunizations for students as a condition for attending public or private institutions of higher education, public or private school, kindergarten, nursery school, preschool and child care facilities in New Jersey. Just looking at the number of sponsors of the two bills tells you that we need your help today to advocate for scientific decision making for immunization policy.

Young parents and even young pediatricians have not witnessed the childhood illnesses that are now a threat of the past. These include the fearful paralysis of polio, the scary fever, pneumonia and encephalitis caused by the measles virus, and the tragic birth defects that occur when a woman gets rubella when she is pregnant. Other childhood diseases that are now rare include: *Haemophilus influenzae* sepsis and meningitis, tetanus and diphtheria.

In part, because of the above noted inexperience the misguided sensationalism of the media, and a variety of anti-vaccine groups fueled by unscientific fear, there is a growing opposition to some, if not all vaccines. One manifestation of this is the recently introduced legislation supporting “conscientious exemptions” from all public health mandated vaccinations and immunization guidelines. This will take us back to the “middle ages” of childhood diseases because of the increase in susceptible children, the loss of herd immunity, and the potential for new and deadly epidemics of old diseases.

**We need your help to make sure parents today never have to see the devastating diseases that vaccines prevent. AAPNJ is asking you to call, write or even better visit your legislator about the dangers of the “conscious exemption”.**

You can find your legislator at the following web site  
<http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/members/legsearch.asp>

We would also appreciate an email sent to [fgallagher@aap.net](mailto:fgallagher@aap.net) and [npinkin@mbi-gs.com](mailto:npinkin@mbi-gs.com) to help track efforts of AAP/NJ members and share success stories in doing the above.

**An additional or alternative way for you to help:** The AAP NJ is working collaboratively with partners on a grassroots effort to reach parents statewide to help ensure that they are given the facts about vaccines from a trusted source – local pediatricians. AAP NJ and NJ PCORE (NJ Pediatric Council on Research & Education, the Foundation for the AAP NJ) are looking for community pediatricians who are interested in speaking to parents at their local school PTA meetings. AAP NJ will provide support related to coordinating efforts between schools and pediatricians and will provide educational materials. Please email [fgallagher@aap.net](mailto:fgallagher@aap.net) if you are interested.

Thank you in advance for your efforts in these important endeavors.

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