



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Representative Lisa Subeck Introduces Legislation to Expand Access to Vaccines

MADISON – Today, Representative Lisa Subeck (D-Madison) introduced three bills to expand access to vaccines and increase vaccination rates in Wisconsin, as well as a resolution recognizing August as National Immunization Awareness Month. The legislation, introduced with Senators Tim Carpenter (D-Milwaukee), Kelda Roys (D-Madison), and Mark Spreitzer (D-Beloit), gives Wisconsin residents and health care providers more avenues to receive and administer immunizations to increase immunization rates and protect against outbreaks of preventable communicable diseases.

“Vaccines protect the health of our communities and our children and ultimately save lives,” said Rep. Subeck. “We must work proactively to increase vaccination rates in Wisconsin and protect against unnecessary outbreaks of preventable diseases.”

Wisconsin is among the states with the broadest exemption allowances to vaccination requirements for school or childcare, which makes it too easy to simply opt out, putting classrooms and communities at risk of outbreaks of preventable diseases. According to the [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#), the percentage of students with a waiver (personal conviction, religious, or medical) for one or more immunizations increased from 1.6% during the 1997-98 school year to 5.4% during the 2022-23 school year. For the 2021-2022 school year, [data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) showed that 6% of Wisconsin kindergartners were opted out of vaccinations by their parents for non-medical reasons, **more than double the national rate of 2.3%.**

“Wisconsin’s declining immunization rates are alarming, and we must act to protect against outbreaks of preventable and too often deadly illnesses,” said Rep. Subeck. “In recent years, we have seen the return of once unheard of outbreaks of measles and other communicable diseases. Expanding access to vaccines and ensuring that children receive their vaccinations is vital to preventing these unnecessary and totally avoidable outbreaks.”

LRB 3881/1 (Subeck/Roys) would allow minors aged 16 years or older to make their own vaccination choices. There is evidence that, when given complete information and control over their preventative medical care, teenagers will decide to receive some or all vaccinations previously withheld by their families.

78TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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LRB 3882/1 (Subeck/Spreitzer) would end the personal conviction waiver for opting out of vaccinations. Wisconsin has one of the broadest exemption allowances in the nation for vaccinations. It is one of the few states that allows opting out of immunizations for medical, religious, and personal reasons. The personal conviction clause is the only exemption addressed in this legislation.

LRB 4027/1 (Subeck/Carpenter) would make Wisconsin a universal vaccine purchasing state, allowing Wisconsin to procure essential vaccines for all children, regardless of income or insurance coverage. At least 15 states have some form of a universal purchasing program.

LRB 3982/1 (Subeck/Carpenter) recognizes August 2023 as National Immunization Awareness Month in Wisconsin.

Rep. Subeck has represented the 78th Assembly District since 2015 and serves as Chair of the Assembly Democratic Caucus.

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