Joel Dorfman, JD

Good morning! My name is Joel Dorfman. I am an attorney, entrepreneur, and father of 4 and I am extremely passionate about the right of every individual to make medical choices for themselves and their families, without discrimination or penalty. I am testifying as a representative of the organization Michigan Opposing Mandatory Vaccines, soon to be Michigan for Vaccine Choice.

- I have provided you with bound materials, which include the current statute pertaining to nonmedical waivers, and the related portion of this rule (Found in Exhibit A). As you can see, the rule has created a new procedure for parents seeking a nonmedical exemption and is in direct conflict with the statutory procedure.

I speak for the thousands of families across the State that value vaccine choice and are concerned about this new rule, many of which are here today, wearing red, could those people please raise your hands. Let me tell you a little bit about who we are.

1. We are not lazy.
    - We are comprised of families whose priority is the health of their children
    - None of us have made our decision, in regard to vaccination, lightly and we should be respected for the efforts we have made to protect the health of our families not treated as deviants.
2. We are not uneducated.
    - In fact, we are very well educated and extremely knowledgeable on the subject of vaccination and have the intellectual acumen to research and understand this topic. We have an intimate understanding of the benefits and the well documented risks of vaccination and have made difficult and informed choices to fully vaccinate, delay vaccination, partially vaccinate, or to not vaccinate at all. We all know that the Supreme Court of the United States determined that vaccines are "unavoidably unsafe" in 2011. That alone is enough to convince me that no one should be allowed to force someone to vaccinate their child or themselves against their will.
    - Many of us disagree with the medical necessity and/or the science of vaccines.
    - If each of you would read the book "Vaccine Epidemic" you might understand us much better.

3. We are law-abiding citizens, but not lemmings.
    - We have followed the clear and unambiguous statutory procedure for almost 40 years.

    - Yet, we are now being forced to visit our county health department and be treated as ignorant deviants for doing what we deem best for our children's health based on our knowledge. In addition, those of us with a vaccine-injured child, are required to hear the State promote the benefits of vaccination, not even mentioning the risks, and in some instances telling us our child's injury was not related to vaccination. Frankly it is insulting and not the place of a HD employee.

4. It is inappropriate for the government to intrude into the parent/child relationship when it comes to their health.

    - This rule has the effect of coercing parents into submitting their healthy child to an unwanted, prophylactic medical procedure. A medical procedure that carries real risk.

    - There is no current urgency or emergency to warrant this governmental intrusion.

    - The HD is disregarding the <u>overall</u> health of our children, which is our priority, and instead obsesses with meeting statistical requirements that do not necessarily confer protection from disease. Vaccinated children contract diseases too with the majority of infections in Michigan, such as pertussis or chicken pox, occurring in fully vaccinated individuals according to MDHHS reports.

    - I have also included a Policy Statement from NACCHO (the National Association of County and City Health Officials) on the elimination of the personal belief exemption, which includes moral and ethical objections to vaccination. I encourage you to read this policy carefully.

    - Clearly, the rule is a direct and inexcusable infringement on parental rights guaranteed by our State Constitution.

5. MOMV has collected data from hundreds of parents across the state regarding their opinions and experiences with the rule change.

- You can find a summary of this data in the bound materials (Exhibit A).
- Parents have indicated this requirement is:
    - Unconstitutional and infringes on our parental rights
    - Puts a government employee in a position of 'policing' our beliefs
    - Subjects us to harassment and bullying by the health department and is discriminatory
    - Almost all indicated it was a waste of time and resources and ineffective – not one person changed their mind
- 27% of those that attended a session stated the health educator prevented them from being able to freely choose their objection to immunization.
- Close to 40% of parents with religious objections were prevented by the health educator from stating that objection on the Health Department Waiver Form. Why is the HD trying to limit religious objections?
- 49% experienced a hardship in attending the meeting (Missed Work, Childcare, long drive)
- 34% had consulted with an attorney prior to their meeting.
- 71% of reporting parents stated their school did NOT inform them of the new process or the parent's right to exempt from one or more vaccinations.
- The waiver sessions vary by County.
    - Some county health departments clearly value the right of the parent to exempt their child and even have expressed their disdain for being put in this position of requiring this education.
    - Many counties are led by 'zealots' who have used this as an opportunity to bully and harass parents and move their agenda forward.
        - For six months, Oakland County unlawfully required that parent's bring their child to the session. No kid, no waiver. Parents were basically shamed in front of their child and because of our outcry the Board of Commissioners agreed and eventually pressured the health department to end this requirement.
        - Oakland County has also put themselves in the position of 'Validating' your objection to vaccination, despite no law affording them this right. I have included this letter in the materials provided.

- Also, most importantly, included in the materials is a petition requesting that this rule be rescinded by MDHHS.
    - This petition garnered over 2,000 signatures in just this past week.
    - Additionally, included in the materials are comments from concerned parents across the State of Michigan collected as part of the petition.

- **In conclusion I must say I have been a proud Michigander for my entire life, I've owned businesses here, and still do, and have raised my family here. I want Michigan to be known as an exemplary state for the respect it gives to parental rights and freedom and the curtailment of governmental intrusion in our lives. I believe we can be that State. No one cares more about the health of our children than we do, certainly not MDHHS nor the CDC. This rule was created based on unfounded and incorrect assumptions by both. It gives the HD unwarranted authority over our parental rights, and it unnecessarily intrudes upon the parent/child and doctor/patient relationship. The rule is unnecessary and unconstitutional and it must be rescinded.**