



**County
Health Officials
of New York**

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SUPPORTS

With Recommendations

A.2186/S.2726 (Dinowitz Skoufis)

AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to requiring children enrolled in an overnight, children's non-regulated, summer day, or travelling camp to be vaccinated

The New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) supports requiring children enrolled in an overnight, children's non-regulated, summer day, or travelling camp to be vaccinated in accordance with the recommendations by the New York State Department of Health.

Prior outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases at summer camps throughout the state have been attributed to unvaccinated campers or staff who attended the camps. Disease outbreaks continue to have a significant impact on the health of children, and result in substantial costs to parents, camps, and local and state governments.

The 2019 measles outbreak and the re-emergence of polio in 2022 should serve as a source of great concern to public health officials, parents, and camp operators as the summer camp season approaches. The transmission of vaccine-preventable diseases by unvaccinated individuals has the potential to impact communities throughout New York State, posing a risk to those who cannot, for medical reasons, be vaccinated, as well as hampering public health efforts to limit the spread of disease. The congregate camp settings increase the likelihood of exposure and transmission. Additionally, camps may send home campers who are ill prior to diagnosis, thus increasing the likelihood of spread to other communities.

NYSACHO strongly supports the provisions of the bill that allow for medical exemption only to the proposed vaccine requirements. Non-medical exemptions result in lower overall vaccination rates, which pose a threat to the health both children and adults who are medically unable to be vaccinated.

NYSACHO strongly recommends that the legislation be amended to require proof of vaccination by camp staff. Camp staff are in regular contact with campers around the clock, and if unvaccinated, put campers and other staff at risk for contagious diseases. While most campers are likely to be vaccinated in compliance with state school vaccination requirements, counselors and other staff from outside the state or country may not be vaccinated. Past camp outbreaks have been associated with imported cases by individuals from other countries or with a history of international travel. In 2005, there were 31 identified cases of mumps that were associated with a camp counselor who had traveled from the United Kingdom and had not been vaccinated for mumps. Immunization requirements for camp employees would reduce the risk of outbreaks due to imported cases of disease.

For the reasons stated above, NYSACHO strongly supports this legislation, with the recommendation that immunization requirements for camp employees be enacted into law as well. We would further recommend that this act become effective immediately, to allow for immediate implementation of this important public health measure to prevent due to ongoing outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases globally that have the potential to impact camp populations.

Contact: Sarah Ravenhall, Executive Director, sravenhall@nysacho.org