

**Oppose A497**

**Children should *not* be vaccinated for any reason**

***without* the voluntary, informed consent of their parents.**

May 5, 2013

Dear Honorable Members of the New York State Legislature,

The non-profit National Vaccine Information Center (NVIC), founded in 1982 to prevent injuries and deaths through public education and protect the informed consent ethic, opposes A497 on behalf of our New York donor supporters. NVIC is a pro-education, pro-informed consent consumer advocacy organization that secured vaccine safety and informed consent provisions in the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986. [[1]](#endnote-1)

NVIC opposes the passage of A497 because it repeals the longstanding legal requirement that vaccine administrators obtain the voluntary, informed consent of a minor child’s parent in order for the child to be vaccinated for a sexually transmitted disease. Practitioners, schools, and others should never be permitted to coerce impressionable minor children into potentially unsafe and unnecessary STD vaccinations behind their parents' backs.

**This is a fundamental product safety and informed consent issue.** The legal right of parents to give their informed consent for minor children to take medical risks, [[2]](#endnote-2) which can result in injury or death, trumps the goals of state agencies or vaccine corporations [[3]](#endnote-3) and medical organizations, [[4]](#endnote-4) [[5]](#endnote-5) whose employees, stockholders or members profit or professionally benefit from increased, widespread vaccine use.

**Unlike medical, school or other personnel administering vaccines, parents are legally accountable and financially responsible for the health care and education of a minor child when that child experiences a vaccine reaction and becomes chronically ill or disabled.**  Existing and future vaccines for sexually transmitted diseases, such as HPV, hepatitis B, herpes, [[6]](#endnote-6) gonorrhea, [[7]](#endnote-7) chlamydia [[8]](#endnote-8) and HIV/AIDS, [[9]](#endnote-9) should not be placed in a special category to allow legally unaccountable individuals to persuade a minor child to get vaccinated without the knowledge or consent of the parent.

**Product Safety & Liability:**

* Vaccines are pharmaceutical products that carry a risk of injury or death, which can be greater for some than others; [[10]](#endnote-10)
* The Institute of Medicine (IOM) concluded in a 2011 report that ***scientific evidence is* *inadequate* to determine whether HPV vaccine *can or cannot* cause different kinds of serious brain and immune system dysfunction,** including brain inflammation (ADEM); chronic inflammatory polyneuropathy, arthralgia, multiple sclerosis, Guillain Barre Syndrome (GBS); ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease); pancreatitis and blood disorders. [[11]](#endnote-11) [[12]](#endnote-12) As of July 2011, there have been 21,000 reports to the government of health problems following HPV (Gardasil) vaccination, including 3,000 serious cases and 98 deaths. **[[13]](#endnote-13)**
* The IOM also concluded that ***scientific evidence is inadequate* to determine whether hepatitis B vaccine *can or cannot* cause serious brain and immune system dysfunction,** including brain inflammation (encephalitis, ADEM) and encephalopathy; multiple sclerosis; optic neuritis; GBS; chronic inflammatory polyneuropathy; vasculitis; lupus; psoriatic, reactive or rheumatoid arthritis; Type 1 diabetes or fibromyalgia. [[14]](#endnote-14) As of July 2011, there have been more than 50,000 reports to the government of health problems following receipt of hepatitis B containing vaccines, including more than 9,000 serious cases and 966 deaths. [[15]](#endnote-15)
* **Vaccine manufacturers, doctors and other vaccine administrators have no legal accountability or financial liability in civil court when a government recommended or mandated vaccine(s) causes permanent injury or death; [[16]](#endnote-16) [[17]](#endnote-17) [[18]](#endnote-18)**
* The U.S. federal Vaccine Injury Compensation Program has awarded more than $2 billion to vaccine victims since 1988 but two out of three vaccine injured plaintiff’s are turned away without financial support. [[19]](#endnote-19)

**Informed Consent & Parental Responsibility:**

* Informed consent to medical risk taking is a human right [[20]](#endnote-20) and is the central ethical principle in the ethical and legal practice of modern medicine; [[21]](#endnote-21) [[22]](#endnote-22) [[23]](#endnote-23)
* There is scientific evidence that the physical, mental and emotional development of children, including pre-adolescents, varies and is often not sufficient to enable children to make well reasoned decisions about risk taking involving their health and well being. [[24]](#endnote-24) [[25]](#endnote-25) [[26]](#endnote-26)
* **A substantial body of U.S. law affirms the fundamental, legal right for parents to make medical, educational and other important welfare decisions for their minor children; [[27]](#endnote-27)**
* Parents are legally and financially responsible for the health care and education of their children and, therefore, parents must retain the legal right to give informed consent to vaccination of the child.

NVIC urges the members of the New York Legislature to oppose A497 and not dismiss the legally required parental consent before a minor child can be vaccinated. Sexually transmitted disease vaccines should not be in a separate class allowing minor child consent without the knowledge or involvement of a child’s parents.

Sincerely,



Dawn Richardson

Director of Advocacy, National Vaccine Information Center

**References:**

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