SUPPORTS

With Recommendations

A.3254-A/S.3958-A (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, with amendments to extend immunization requirements to camp employees.

Prior outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases at summer camps throughout the state have been linked to unvaccinated campers or staff who attended the camps. Disease outbreaks significantly impact the health of children and adults in camp settings, and result in substantial health risks, and costs to parents, camps, and local and state governments.

The 2019 measles outbreak and the re-emergence of polio in 2022 highlight the risks and potential at any time for reemergence of vaccine-preventable diseases among unvaccinated populations. The transmission of these diseases in unvaccinated populations 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. 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 also supports requiring proof of vaccination by camp staff. Camp staff are in close contact with campers, sometimes 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, thirty-one identified cases of mumps were associated with an unvaccinated camp counselor who had traveled from the United Kingdom. Immunization requirements for camp employees would reduce the risk of outbreaks due to imported cases of disease. Additionally, illness among camp staff poses a risk to a camp's ability to maintain safe staffing ratios necessary to remain operational.

For the reasons stated above, NYSACHO strongly supports this legislation and recommends that it be enacted into law immediately.

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