A BILL FOR AN ACT

CONCERNING THE MODERNIZATION OF THE SCHOOL ENTRY IMMUNIZATION PROCESS.

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at http://leg.colorado.gov.)

The bill codifies a definition of "nonmedical exemption" to mean an immunization exemption based upon a religious belief whose teachings are opposed to immunizations or a personal belief that is opposed to immunizations.

Under current law, each student must submit to a school, as defined in section 25-4-901, either a certificate of immunization, a
certificate of medical exemption, or a statement of nonmedical exemption for an immunization for a religious or personal belief. The bill requires the department of public health and environment (department) to develop standardized forms and a submission process for persons who want to claim a nonmedical exemption for an immunization for a religious or personal belief. A person who wants to claim a nonmedical exemption for an immunization for a religious or personal belief can do so by submitting to the school either:

- A certificate of completion of the online education module;
- or
- A certificate of nonmedical exemption.

The bill requires the department to annually evaluate the state's immunization practices, including an examination of best practices and guidelines recommended by the advisory committee on immunization practices. The state board of health may update the state's immunization practices pursuant to the annual evaluation.

The bill creates a vaccine-protected children standard, whereby the immunization rate goal for every school is 95% of the student population to be vaccinated. The bill requires the department to amend an immunization document it currently publishes annually to include information about the vaccine-protected children standard. Every school shall publish its immunization rate and exemption rate on the document and annually distribute it to the parents, legal guardians, and students of the school.

The bill requires, as applicable, a practitioner who is a licensed physician, physician assistant, advanced practice nurse, or person authorized pursuant to title 12 to administer immunizations within their scope of practice to students and to submit immunization, medical, or nonmedical exemption data to the immunization tracking system. The practitioner is not subject to a regulatory sanction for noncompliance.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. Legislative declaration. (1) The general assembly finds and declares that:

(a) Immunizations save lives and money. Each year in the United States, immunizations save 33,000 lives, prevent 14 million disease cases, and save $9.9 billion in direct health care costs.

(b) In 2017, more than 9,000 Colorado children, a majority of them young children, were hospitalized or went to an emergency
department to be treated for a vaccine-preventable disease, resulting in
$55.5 million in charges;

(c) In 2016, the cost to investigate and prevent the spread of
disease from just two Colorado measles cases exceeded $68,000 in public
funding;

(d) In 1777, George Washington, as the commander in chief of the
Continental Army, determined that his troops would be inoculated against
smallpox. Smallpox significantly affected troops who fought for the
British. George Washington's decision to inoculate the Continental Army
contributed to America's independence from the British.

(e) During the Spanish-American War, more American soldiers
died from yellow fever, malaria, and other diseases than from combat.
The U.S. Army created the Yellow Fever Commission, which was led by
Major Walter Reed, a surgeon. The commission's work eventually helped
contribute to the development of the 17D vaccine against yellow fever,
a vaccine that is still used today.

(f) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identified
vaccinations as one of the 10 great public health achievements of the
twentieth century. Since 1900, the average lifespan of people in the
United States has lengthened by more than 30 years. Twenty-five years
of this gain are attributable to public health advances, including the
eradication of smallpox; the elimination of poliomyelitis in the Americas;
and the control of measles, rubella, tetanus, diphtheria, Haemophilus
influenzae type b, and other infectious diseases in the United States and
other parts of the world.

(g) Evidence shows that state immunization requirements for
schools, including child care facilities, are important tools for maintaining
high immunization coverage rates to prevent dangerous, costly, and sometimes deadly diseases;

(h) Evidence shows that states with lenient exemption policies, such as Colorado, experience higher rates of vaccine-preventable diseases;

(i) Compared to other states, Colorado has one of the highest exemption rates for nonmedical reasons;

(j) In 2018, Colorado ranked last among 49 states that reported kindergarten measles, mumps, and rubella vaccination rates;

(k) During the 2018-19 school year, 28,874 kindergarten through twelfth grade students attended Colorado schools without protection from one or more vaccine-preventable diseases;

(l) Statewide, nearly 25,000 students would potentially be excluded from school for up to 21 days in the case of a measles outbreak because they have a nonmedical exemption filed for the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine;

(m) Because diseases such as measles can spread rapidly, 95% immunization coverage in schools helps to protect the health of students, staff, and others in the community, including people who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons or because they are too young to have received all recommended vaccines; and

(n) Accurate and up-to-date documentation of immunization status supports coordinated and effective public health disease control response efforts in the case of an outbreak, which help protect the overall health of a community.

(2) Therefore, the general assembly declares that all children deserve to attend schools, including child care facilities, that provide them
with the greatest protection from vaccine-preventable diseases, support
their well-being, and build strong foundations for learning and thriving.

**SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 25-4-901, **add** (1.7)
as follows:

25-4-901. **Definitions.** As used in this part 9, unless the context
otherwise requires:

(1.7) "NONMEDICAL EXEMPTION" MEANS AN IMMUNIZATION
EXEMPTION BASED UPON A RELIGIOUS BELIEF WHOSE TEACHINGS ARE
OPPOSED TO IMMUNIZATIONS OR A PERSONAL BELIEF THAT IS OPPOSED TO
IMMUNIZATIONS.

**SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 25-4-902, **amend** (1)
and (4) as follows:

25-4-902. **Immunization prior to attending school - standardized
immunization information.** (1) Except as provided in
section 25-4-903, A student shall not attend any school in the state of
Colorado on or after the dates specified in section 25-4-906 (4) unless he
or she has presented the following to the appropriate school official:

(a) (I) An up-to-date certificate of immunization from a licensed
physician, a **licensed** PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT AUTHORIZED PURSUANT TO
SECTION 12-240-107 (6), advanced practice nurse, or authorized
representative of the department of public health and environment or
county, district, or municipal A LOCAL public health agency stating that
the student has received immunization against communicable diseases as
specified by the state board of health, based on recommendations of the
advisory committee on immunization practices of THE CENTERS FOR
DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION IN the United States FEDERAL
department of health and human services. or the American academy of

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pediatrics; or

(II) UNLESS REQUIRED BY THE SCHOOL DISTRICT RECEIVING THE
NOTIFICATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 22-33-104.5 (3)(e), A STUDENT IS
NOT REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH SUBSECTION (1)(a)(I) OF THIS SECTION IF
THE STUDENT IS PARTICIPATING IN A NONPUBLIC HOME-BASED
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-33-104.5. IF THE
SCHOOL DISTRICT REQUIRES COMPLIANCE WITH SUBSECTION (1)(a)(I) OF
THIS SECTION, THE PARENT IN CHARGE MAY COMPLY WITH SECTION
22-33-104.5 (3)(g) BY MAINTAINING AN UP-TO-DATE CERTIFICATE OF
IMMUNIZATION.

(b) A written authorization signed by one parent or LEGAL
guardian, or an authorization signed by the AN emancipated student, OR
A STUDENT EIGHTEEN YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER requesting that local
PUBLIC health officials administer the immunizations; OR

(c) (I) A CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXEMPTION, OR A CERTIFICATE
OF COMPLETION OF THE ONLINE EDUCATION MODULE OR A CERTIFICATE OF
NONMEDICAL EXEMPTION IN COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 25-4-903. A
CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXEMPTION, OR A CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION
OF THE ONLINE EDUCATION MODULE OR A CERTIFICATE OF NONMEDICAL
EXEMPTION, IS ONLY VALID IF COMPLETED IN COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION
25-4-903.

(II) UNLESS REQUIRED BY THE SCHOOL DISTRICT RECEIVING THE
NOTIFICATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 22-33-104.5 (3)(e), A STUDENT IS
NOT REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH SUBSECTION (1)(c)(I) OF THIS SECTION IF
THE STUDENT IS PARTICIPATING IN A NONPUBLIC HOME-BASED
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-33-104.5. IF THE
SCHOOL DISTRICT REQUIRES COMPLIANCE WITH SUBSECTION (1)(c)(I) OF
THIS SECTION, THE PARENT IN CHARGE MAY COMPLY WITH SECTION 22-33-104.5 (3)(g) BY MAINTAINING AN UP-TO-DATE CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXEMPTION, OR A CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION OF THE ONLINE EDUCATION MODULE OR CERTIFICATE OF NONMEDICAL EXEMPTION.

(4) (a) On or before March 1, 2011 JANUARY 15, 2021, the department of public health and environment shall develop and provide to the department of education AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES a standardized document regarding childhood immunizations. The department of education AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES shall post the standardized immunization document on its website THEIR WEBSITES on or before January 15, 2021 JANUARY 31, 2021, and ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 31 each year thereafter. The standardized document MUST be updated annually and MUST include, but need not be limited to:

(a) (I) A list of the immunizations required for enrollment in a school and the age at which the immunization is required; and

(b) (II) A list of immunizations currently recommended for children by the center for disease control advisory committee on immunization practices OF THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION IN THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES and the recommended age at which each immunization should be given;

(III) A PLACE ON THE DOCUMENT WHERE A SCHOOL CAN INCLUDE THE SCHOOL'S SPECIFIC IMMUNIZATION AND EXEMPTION RATES FOR THE SCHOOL'S ENROLLED STUDENT POPULATION FOR THE PRIOR SCHOOL YEAR COMPARED TO THE VACCINE-PROTECTED CHILDREN STANDARD DESCRIBED IN SECTION 25-4-911; AND
(IV) A statement that the school is required to collect and report the information pursuant to this subsection (4)(a) and that the school does not control the school's specific immunization and exemption rates or establish the vaccine-protected children standard described in section 25-4-911.

(b) On or before February 15, 2021, and on or before February 15 each year thereafter, a school shall include on the document the school's specific immunization and exemption rates for the school's enrolled student population for the prior school year compared to the vaccine-protected children standard described in section 25-4-911. The school shall directly distribute the document to the parent or legal guardian of each student enrolled in its school, emancipated students, or students eighteen years of age or older, consistent with section 25-4-903 (5).

SECTION 4. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 25-4-903, amend (2) and (5); and add (2.2), (2.3), and (2.7) as follows:

25-4-903. Exemptions from immunization - rules. (2) It is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian to have his or her child immunized unless the child is exempted pursuant to this section. A student shall be exempted from receiving the required immunizations in the following manner: A parent or legal guardian shall have his or her student immunized, unless the student is exempted pursuant to this section, or an emancipated student or a student eighteen years of age or older shall have himself or herself immunized, unless the student is exempted pursuant to this section. A
STUDENT IS EXEMPTED FROM RECEIVING THE REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER:

(a) By submitting to the student's school certification A COMPLETED CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXEMPTION from a licensed physician, physician assistant authorized under PURSUANT TO section 12-240-107 (6), or advanced practice nurse that the physical condition of the student is such that one or more specified immunizations would endanger his or her life or health or is medically contraindicated due to other medical conditions; or

(b) (I) By submitting to the student's school a statement of EITHER A COMPLETED CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION OF THE ONLINE EDUCATION MODULE OR A COMPLETED CERTIFICATE OF NONMEDICAL exemption signed by one parent or LEGAL guardian, or the AN emancipated student, or a student eighteen years of age or older that the parent, LEGAL guardian, or student is an adherent to a religious belief whose teachings are opposed to immunizations or that the parent or guardian or the emancipated student or student eighteen years of age or older has a personal belief that is opposed to immunizations.

(II) (A) A COMPLETE CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION OF THE ONLINE EDUCATION MODULE IS ACQUIRED UPON COMPLETING THE ONLINE EDUCATION MODULE DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (2.7) OF THIS SECTION.

(B) A COMPLETE CERTIFICATE OF NONMEDICAL EXEMPTION MUST INCLUDE THE SIGNATURE OF A PERSON WHO IS AUTHORIZED PURSUANT TO TITLE 12 TO ADMINISTER IMMUNIZATIONS WITHIN HIS OR HER SCOPE OF PRACTICE TO THE STUDENT FOR WHOM THE CERTIFICATE OF NONMEDICAL EXEMPTION IS SOUGHT. NOTHING IN THIS SUBSECTION (2)(b)(II)(B) REQUIRES A PERSON AUTHORIZED PURSUANT TO TITLE 12 TO ADMINISTER
IMMUNIZATIONS WITHIN HIS OR HER SCOPE OF PRACTICE TO SIGN A CERTIFICATE OF NONMEDICAL EXEMPTION.

(2.2) (a) (I) A LICENSED PHYSICIAN, PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT AUTHORIZED PURSUANT TO SECTION 12-240-107 (6), OR ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSE SHALL PROVIDE A COPY OF A COMPLETED CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXEMPTION TO THE STUDENT'S PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN, THE EMANCIPATED STUDENT, OR THE STUDENT EIGHTEEN YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER.

(II) THE CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION OF THE ONLINE EDUCATION MODULE MUST BE IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD OR PRINT UPON COMPLETION OF THE ONLINE EDUCATION MODULE. THE CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION OF THE ONLINE EDUCATION MODULE DEVELOPED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT MUST INCLUDE THE SAME INFORMATION AS THE CERTIFICATE OF NONMEDICAL EXEMPTION PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (2.3) OF THIS SECTION.

(III) A PERSON AUTHORIZED PURSUANT TO TITLE 12 TO ADMINISTER IMMUNIZATIONS WITHIN HIS OR HER SCOPE OF PRACTICE TO THE STUDENT FOR WHOM THE CERTIFICATE OF NONMEDICAL EXEMPTION IS SOUGHT AND WHO SIGNS THE CERTIFICATE OF NONMEDICAL EXEMPTION FORM SHALL PROVIDE A COPY OF A COMPLETED CERTIFICATE OF NONMEDICAL EXEMPTION TO THE STUDENT'S PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN, THE EMANCIPATED STUDENT, OR THE STUDENT EIGHTEEN YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER.

(b)(I) A LICENSED PHYSICIAN, PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT AUTHORIZED PURSUANT TO SECTION 12-240-107 (6), OR ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSE SHALL SUBMIT THE MEDICAL EXEMPTION DATA TO THE IMMUNIZATION TRACKING SYSTEM CREATED IN SECTION 25-4-2403.
(II) A person authorized pursuant to Title 12 to administer immunizations within his or her scope of practice to the student for whom the certificate of nonmedical exemption is sought and who signs the certificate of nonmedical exemption shall submit the nonmedical exemption data to the immunization tracking system created in section 25-4-2403.

(III) Notwithstanding subsections (2.2)(b)(I) and (2.2)(b)(II) of this section, a licensed physician, physician assistant authorized pursuant to section 12-240-107(6), advanced practice nurse, or a person authorized pursuant to Title 12 to administer immunizations within his or her scope of practice is not subject to a regulatory sanction for failing to submit medical exemption or nonmedical exemption data to the immunization tracking system.

(2.3) (a) On or before January 1, 2021, the Department of Public Health and Environment shall develop and post on its website a standardized certificate of medical exemption form and a standardized certificate of nonmedical exemption form.

The Department of Public Health and Environment shall post any updated form on its website.

(b) At a minimum, the forms developed by the Department of Public Health and Environment must:

(I) Include a notice that informs the student’s parent or legal guardian, the emancipated student, or the student eighteen years of age or older of the option to exclude the student’s medical or nonmedical exemption information from the immunization tracking system established in section 25-4-2403;
(II) Be limited to requests for information related to collecting data pertaining to a medical or nonmedical exemption, including but not limited to:

(A) demographic information for the student, parent, or legal guardian, not including a social security number;

(B) the name and location of the student's school;

(C) the student's immunization information and the vaccine or vaccines for which the exemption applies; and

(D) whether a medical exemption or a nonmedical exemption is claimed;

(III) include references to scientifically based information regarding the benefits and risks of immunizations; and

(IV) not require the student's parent or legal guardian, the emancipated student, or the student eighteen years of age or older to provide any information that would identify the religious faith or describe the reasons for the personal belief of the student's parent or legal guardian, the emancipated student, or the student eighteen years of age or older who is claiming a nonmedical exemption. The existing immunization tracking system established in section 25-4-2403 must not receive or store any information that would identify the religious faith or the reasons for the personal belief of the student's parent or legal guardian, the emancipated student, or the student eighteen years of age or older who is claiming the exemption.

(2.7) The online learning module administered by the
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT PURSUANT TO
SUBSECTION (2.5)(a) MUST:

(a) INCLUDE SCIENTIFIC DATA THAT IS EVIDENCE BASED AND PEER
REVIEWED FROM CREDIBLE SCIENTIFIC AND PUBLIC HEALTH
ORGANIZATIONS TO DISCLOSE THE BENEFITS AND RISKS OF IMMUNIZATION
AND EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF
VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASE;

(b) BE INTERACTIVE; AND

(c) INCLUDE OTHER CRITERIA ADOPTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT.

(5) Each school shall make the immunization and exemption rates
of their enrolled student population publicly available upon request AND
PURSUANT TO SECTION 25-4-902 (4)(b).

SECTION 5. In Colorado Revised Statutes, add 25-4-904.5 as
follows:

25-4-904.5. Annual alignment evaluation. The department of
public health and environment shall annually evaluate the
state's immunization practices, including an examination of
updated best practices and guidelines recommended by the
advisory committee on immunization practices of the centers for
disease control and prevention in the federal department of
health and human services. The state board of health shall
review the department of public health and environment's
annual evaluation and may update the state's immunization
practices pursuant to the department of public health and
environment's annual evaluation.

SECTION 6. In Colorado Revised Statutes, add 25-4-911 as
follows:

25-4-911. Vaccine-protected children standard - legislative declaration. (1) The General Assembly finds and declares it is necessary to establish a vaccine-protected children standard, whereby the immunization rate goal for every school is ninety-five percent of the student population to be vaccinated according to the school immunization schedule established by the state board of health pursuant to section 25-4-904. Achieving this immunization rate goal will help reduce the spread of infectious diseases and protect the health of all people in the school community, including the students who cannot be immunized for medical reasons.

(2) In order to achieve the immunization rate goal described in subsection (1) of this section, the department of public health and environment shall collaborate with local public health agencies and schools to provide information and technical assistance regarding best practices to educate and engage with students and families about vaccines, the risks of vaccine-preventable diseases, and where vaccines are administered.

SECTION 7. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 25-4-2403, amend (2) introductory portion; and add (2.5) as follows:

25-4-2403. Department of public health and environment - powers and duties - immunization tracking system - rules - definitions. (2) To enable the gathering of epidemiological information and investigation and control of communicable diseases, the department of public health and environment may establish a
comprehensive immunization tracking system with immunization information gathered by state and local PUBLIC health officials from the following sources:

(2.5) (a) A PRACTITIONER WHO IS A LICENSED PHYSICIAN, PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT AUTHORIZED PURSUANT TO SECTION 12-240-107 (6), ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSE, OR PERSON AUTHORIZED PURSUANT TO TITLE 12 TO ADMINISTER IMMUNIZATIONS WITHIN HIS OR HER SCOPE OF PRACTICE SHALL SUBMIT IMMUNIZATION, MEDICAL EXEMPTION, OR NONMEDICAL EXEMPTION DATA TO THE TRACKING SYSTEM.

(b) NOTWITHSTANDING SUBSECTION (2.5)(a) OF THIS SECTION, A PRACTITIONER WHO IS A LICENSED PHYSICIAN, PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT AUTHORIZED PURSUANT TO SECTION 12-240-107(6), ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSE, OR A PERSON AUTHORIZED PURSUANT TO TITLE 12 TO ADMINISTER IMMUNIZATIONS WITHIN HIS OR HER SCOPE OF PRACTICE IS NOT SUBJECT TO A REGULATORY SANCTION FOR FAILING TO SUBMIT IMMUNIZATION, MEDICAL EXEMPTION, OR NONMEDICAL EXEMPTION DATA TO THE IMMUNIZATION TRACKING SYSTEM.

SECTION 8. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds, determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety.