

Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-457

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S
RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CONNECTICUT'S IMMUNIZATION

Title: INFORMATION SYSTEM.

Vote Date: 3/23/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/21/2022

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Public Health Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill expands the scope of the state's immunization information system (CT WiZ) to include all residents, rather than just children, to provide more complete and useful data on immunizations, address unvaccinated communities, and improve health equity. The bill requires providers to report immunizations of patients of all ages through CT Wiz, and requires them to provide the patient or their legal guardian with information on how to opt out. It also requires the Department of Public Health (DPH) to provide that information in aggregated form to local health directors, allows the Department to exchange that information with state and federal agencies, and allows residents to access their own vaccination information upon request. Additionally, the bill requires providers participating in the Connecticut Vaccine Program (for children) to place all vaccine orders through CT WiZ.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Manisha Juthani, Commissioner, Department of Public Health:

DPH is in support of this bill. Using the CT WiZ system, healthcare providers and public health officials have been able to track COVID-19 vaccinations administered, identify communities experiencing low vaccination rates, and determine locations in need of additional outreach. This bill will ensure that a person's vaccination record is complete throughout their medical history and into adulthood. If new or additional doses of any vaccine are needed, or immunization history is unknown, providers in Connecticut will have the ability to access this information. Additionally, centralized vaccination reporting in CT WiZ will allow the Department to analyze population-based vaccination data to address under-vaccinated communities and minimize health disparities.

Victoria Veltri, Executive Director, Office of Health Strategy:

OHS is also supportive of this bill, which allows for the bidirectional connectivity between the State's Immunization Information System, CT WiZ and the State-wide Health Information Exchange, Connie. Providing vaccination information in Connie allows patients to be empowered consumers. Medical providers who review their patients' medical information in advance of a visit or in support of care they are providing, similarly should see critical information in one location regarding immunizations along with other problems, medications, or allergies.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Connecticut Hospital Association:

While CHA is supportive of this bill's effort to update the immunization information system, they feel that the description under which a practitioner intending to administer a vaccine may consult the immunization information system is too narrow and would limit the ability of a practitioner's organization to assist in planning for vaccination appointments, or otherwise create efficiencies for patient visits, and assessment of supplies and basic preparations for having the right vaccines available at the time of the patient's visit. They suggest that individuals or organizations acting on behalf of practitioners also have access to that system.

Jody Terranova, President-Elect, American Academy of Pediatrics- CT Chapter:

They support expanding this system beyond its primary use of documenting childhood vaccines to now include all vaccine recipients. Expanding the Immunization Information System to include all providers and all vaccine recipients in the state will improve the accuracy of vaccine records, improve patient care, and strengthen this public health tool.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Anne Manusky, President, Connecticut Republican Assembly:

The immunization registry is now extended to everyone, not just those under first grade. Nothing in the language suggests that knowledge of vaccine status is somehow limited to nurses and kids, high schoolers, or university students. No details are given on how to decline enrollment in such a registry. This bill is the beginning of a global implementation of Smart Health Cards (aka vaccine passports, digital ID, ID2020, etc). Many in CT and certain legislators are keenly aware of this.

Dr. Linda Dalessio, Wolcott:

Providers have no right to any health information or a broad statement of "sufficient information" unless approved by the child's parents or guardians in writing. This should never be an opt out, but an opt in, if citizens wish to have their child's confidential health care information released to unelected bureaucrats. Allowing agencies to exchange immunization information is a clear violation of health care privacy that ushers in a digital passport.

Dan Marcil:

Healthcare decisions are personal and private and should not be discussed or disclosed without individual consent. This is not for the government to decide, nor should the government have custody of this data unless express permission is given.

Karen Ravalese:

Allowing the Commissioner of Public Health or their designee the right to exchange private and personal information with no opt out or no consent needed is unethical and an abuse of power by one's Government. This bill would infringe on one's privacy as well as create the potential for personal and private information to be shared freely.

Dawn Simonds:

Our healthcare records are our business and ours alone unless we sign an authorization to reveal them to a 3rd party that we deem necessary or for medical payment of claims. It is a violation of CT state law and HIPAA to enact this bill.

Additional Testimony in Opposition

- Heather Diver, Farmington
- Kate Gorman, Farmington
- Senan Gorman, Farmington
- Marcella Kurowski, Wallingford
- Rogers Pylant, Middletown
- Melanie Yong, Montville
- Gary Corigliano
- David Godbout

Reported by: Dallas Emerle

Date: 4/6/2022