



June 22, 2015

The Honorable Ron Young  
Chairman, Ohio House Commerce and Labor Committee  
77 S. High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Young:

As a physician who practices in infectious disease and as Chairman of Cleveland Clinic's infectious disease department, I write to express our concern with HB 170, a bill which impacts an employer's ability in taking an adverse employment action against a person who has not been or will not be vaccinated against influenza. To ensure a safe and healthy hospital environment for our patients, we must support influenza mandatory vaccinations for our health care workers.

Flu vaccination not only helps to prevent the flu, but also leads to a decrease in hospitalizations. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) flu vaccination was associated with a 71% reduction in flu-related hospitalizations among adults of all ages and a 77% reduction among adults aged 50 years or older. A recent study also showed that flu vaccine reduced children's risk of flu-related pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) admission by 74%. We have a particular responsibility to protect the most vulnerable of our patient population, children and older adults, from influenza and influenza related conditions.

Ensuring appropriate flu vaccination is taking place not only reduces the risk of more serious health outcomes, but it also saves the health care system costs by resulting in lower rates of hospitalization. Flu vaccination should be strongly encouraged for the general population, and should be mandatory for health care workers. To put it simply, responsible vaccination policies save lives. According to the CDC one death is prevented for every 4,000 people vaccinated against the flu.

As a hospital system committed to decreasing the impact of infectious disease, and improving health outcomes, we oppose HB 170. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Steven M. Gordon'.

Steven M. Gordon, MD

CC: Members, Ohio House Commerce and Labor Committee