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**SENATE ENDS NON-MEDICAL EXEMPTION FOR VACCINES
AMIDST HISTORIC MEASLES OUTBREAK**

There are 924 confirmed measles cases across the state of New York as of June 10, 2019

Nearly 80% of unvaccinated children used the religious exemption to opt out of required vaccinations in 2017-2018, per State health officials

ALBANY, NY – Senator Brad Hoylman’s (D/WF-Manhattan) legislation ([S2994/A2371](#)) to end the non-medical exemption for vaccination passed through the Senate today. This comes as New York continues to face its worst measles outbreak since 1992 with over 924 cases confirmed to date.

Senator Hoylman said: “Today, the State Senate is sending a strong message to New Yorkers that vaccines are safe and effective. We’re putting science ahead of misinformation about vaccines and standing up for the rights of immunocompromised children and adults, pregnant women and infants who can’t be vaccinated through no fault of their own. With our actions today, we can help avoid future outbreaks of vaccine-preventable illnesses like measles. I’m exceedingly grateful to the leadership of Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and my Senate colleagues for their

support of our legislation ending non-medical exemptions for vaccinations in New York.”

Bill Co-sponsor Senator Carlucci said: “Ending non-medical vaccine exemptions will get more people vaccinated and help stop the spread of the Measles. This is about public safety and following science. Vaccines save lives, and not one single organized religion denounces vaccines. We cannot allow misinformation based on junk science to fuel anti-vaccine sentiment. This is the right step forward.”

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz said: “I am incredibly proud that science has won with the passage of this bill. We should be taking medical advice from medical professionals, not strangers on the internet spreading pseudo-science misinformation. This will not be the end of our efforts to combat the ongoing measles outbreak, but it is an important step.

The vitriolic language coming from those in the gallery who opposed the bill highlights the depths to which the rhetoric around this conversation has fallen. Those of us who have been advocating for increased vaccination have frequently been on the receiving end of their vitriol for many months, but now it has been laid bare in their breach of decorum. I hope that we can move forward from here, with level heads, and work together to protect the health of New Yorkers – particularly those with compromised immune systems and those who are too young to be vaccinated. Thank you to Speaker Carl Heastie for his leadership in helping steward this legislation through the Assembly, to Senator Hoylman for leading the charge in the State Senate, and all the advocates who fought for this important public health policy change.”

Teela Wyman, a Kids v Cancer Youth Board Member and New York law student who is a cancer survivor and is immunocompromised said: “The trade-off between not giving children vaccines and giving children vaccines is the difference between me and other cancer survivors being able to be normal people, live normal lives and not be afraid of dying because somebody near us has the measles. We have already put in so much work in just to be alive. This bill to repeal non-medical vaccination exemptions for schools will protect us. It will let us be a step closer to the lives we’ve prayed for for so long. The measles is an extra complexity that might not seem frightening to you but it’s terrifying to us.”

Toby Pallone, a Kids v Cancer Youth Board Member and a New York high school student who is a pediatric cancer survivor said: When a person goes to the doctor’s to get a vaccination, they aren’t just protecting themselves from being sick, They’re

protecting their friends, their neighbors, and their community. It is a life or death decision when a person decides to not vaccinate himself or his kids. We have a beautiful state of 19 million people, and all of us deserve the gift of life. We thank the Health Committee members and ask them to continue their support of this critical bill when it goes to the Assembly floor

Cub Barrett, VP, Communications and Public Affairs for Gay Men's Health Crisis

(GMHC) said: As an organization founded in response to a public health epidemic, GMHC understands that, to protect the health and safety of all New Yorkers, we must take bold, swift, and evidence-based action to address public health issues. Repealing exemptions for children to be vaccinated is what we would call a bold, evidence-based action. As our State Senator, Brad Hoylman, says, parents who refuse to vaccinate their children put the health of every New Yorker at risk. We can't let this continue. We applaud the New York State Senate for recognizing – and acting on – this critical issue.”

After California repealed their non-medical exemptions, their vaccination rates improved demonstrably, particularly in schools with the lowest rates of compliance. The percentage of kindergarten students in the 2017-18 school year with all their required vaccines was 95.1% - a 4.7 percentage point increase over 2014-15.

Current law requires children to receive vaccines for polio, mumps, measles, diphtheria, rubella, HiB, hepatitis B, and varicella. Senator Hoylman and Assemblymember Dinowitz's legislation would repeal an exemption to this law that allows children to avoid vaccination on the grounds that they contradict the “genuine and sincere religious belief” of the child's parents or guardians.

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