

Testimony
House Bill 1453
House Education Committee
February 9, 2015; 9:00 a.m.
North Dakota Department of Health

Good morning Chairman Nathe and members of the House Education Committee. My name is Kirby Kruger, and I am the Director of the Division of Disease Control for the North Dakota Department of Health. I am here today to testify in opposition to HB 1453.

The Division of Disease Control relies on working cooperatively with schools to determine immunization and exemption rates in schools. Additionally, we work closely with schools to investigate and prevent cases of contagious diseases, such as meningitis, tuberculosis and vaccine-preventable diseases. With the current outbreak of measles in the United States, it is imperative that we be able to work with schools to collect important information on immunization and infectious disease investigations. The department is concerned that this bill would prohibit schools from working with us on important public health issues.

Furthermore, we believe that HB1453 would not allow health care providers to report immunizations to the state's immunization registry if the recipient of the immunization is a student, and would prohibit health care providers from reporting diseases diagnosed in students to the department.

Federal law included in the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) currently protects the privacy of student education records. FERPA allows educational agencies and institutions to disclose personally identifiable, non-directory information to appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency. Additionally, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) protects any of the health information that the Department of Health collects on students.

This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.