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Via Email

Florida Department of Health
4052 Bald Cypress Way
Tallahassee, FL 32399
VaccineRule@flhealth.gov

Re: Request for Public Input and Reconsideration of Proposed Rule Removing School Vaccination Requirements

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Global Healthy Living Foundation (GHLF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that operates free arthritis clinics Boynton, Boca Raton and Lake Worth in Palm Beach County and a fourth clinic in Stuart in Martin County, and is additionally a national organization representing patients and families impacted by chronic diseases, we write to express our profound concern regarding the proposed rule eliminating the long-standing requirement that children be vaccinated as a prerequisite for attending public school in Florida.

Vaccination has been one of the greatest public health achievements of the last century. By requiring routine immunizations such as polio, measles, mumps, rubella, and pertussis, states have protected generations of children and families, dramatically reducing the prevalence of once-devastating diseases.

Removing these requirements will predictably decrease vaccination rates, leading to renewed outbreaks of vaccine-preventable illnesses, endangering not only children but also the broader community. Immunocompromised individuals — including many of the patients we serve — are particularly at risk, as they often cannot be vaccinated themselves and rely on community immunity for protection.

While we recognize that reasonable people may disagree on the specifics of public health policy, it is deeply troubling that this proposal has moved forward without an opportunity for public comment. Decisions of such profound consequences for the health and safety of Florida's children and communities should not be made without meaningful input from patients, parents, health professionals, and the general public.

The absence of a public comment period undermines transparency and democratic process, and risks silencing the very voices most directly affected by this policy.

Indeed, public sentiment in Florida overwhelmingly favors keeping the vaccine requirements.¹

¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2025/09/04/coronavirus-vaccines-mandates-state-divisions/>

Accordingly, we respectfully request that the Department of Health:

1. Immediately solicit and accept public input on the proposed rule, ensuring that patient and community perspectives are fully considered; and
2. Reconsider this proposal in light of the overwhelming scientific consensus that routine childhood vaccinations are safe, effective, and essential to protecting vulnerable populations.

Florida has long benefited from the protection of school-based vaccine requirements. We urge you not to turn back the clock on decades of progress in public health.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We would welcome the opportunity to meet or provide additional patient perspectives to inform your decision-making.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Newmark", written over a horizontal line.

Steven Newmark
Chief Policy Officer

