

INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2017-079

REQUESTING THAT THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE,  
AND LABOR STUDY METHODS TO ENHANCE ACCESS TO IMMUNIZATIONS IN  
ARKANSAS BY OVERCOMING CHALLENGES TO IMMUNIZATION ACCESS.

WHEREAS, Arkansas has low rates of immunization among citizens across  
the state and often has the lowest rates of immunization across the nation;  
and

WHEREAS, in 2015, among Arkansas's children, only sixty-six percent  
(66%) of children between the ages of nineteen to thirty-five (19-35) months  
old received vaccinations, compared with seventy-one and six-tenths percent  
(71.6%) nationally; and

WHEREAS, the Arkansas Immunization Action Coalition has identified  
several challenges that affect the current immunization process in Arkansas:

1. Immunization data is incomplete, making true immunization  
rates by provider site or geographical area difficult to determine because:

A. Only twenty-five percent (25%) of immunization  
providers are currently reporting data; and

B. Data from other states is not electronically reported  
to the Arkansas state database;

2. Families lack access to immunization services due to the low  
number of public and private immunization providers in Arkansas and because  
those providers are located inequitably across the state;

3. Parents often have difficulty determining which vaccines  
their children need as:

A. Many parents who intend to vaccinate their children are  
unaware of recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization  
Practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and how to access  
vaccines and immunizations;

B. Some parents choose alternative immunization schedules  
based on misinformation; and

C. Increased numbers of parents are requesting  
philosophical exemptions for vaccines required for school attendance;

1           4. Medical providers face barriers to offering immunizations due  
2 to:

3                   A. Increasing requirements by the Vaccines for Children  
4 Program and the State Children's Health Insurance Program;

5                   B. Increasing costs of purchasing, storing, tracking, and  
6 administering the immunizations;

7                   C. Stagnating reimbursement rates for vaccine purchasing  
8 and administering; and

9                   D. Limiting scope of practice state laws regarding the  
10 administration of immunizations to certain age groups;

11           5. Daycares and schools frequently do not achieve student  
12 compliance with immunization requirements; and

13           6. Current efforts to improve immunization rates and quality of  
14 care need better coordination and collaboration; and

15  
16           WHEREAS, the Arkansas Medicaid Program does not provide coverage and  
17 reimbursement for:

18                   1. All recommended immunizations for adult patients;

19                   2. Any immunization administration fees for adult patients; and

20                   3. Immunizations administered through a pharmacy as point-of-  
21 care claims; and

22  
23           WHEREAS, access to immunizations and increased immunization rates can  
24 improve the overall health outcomes of the citizens of Arkansas; and

25  
26           WHEREAS, the General Assembly should pursue all efforts to improve  
27 health care and health outcomes across the state,

28  
29 NOW THEREFORE,

30 BE IT PROPOSED BY THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR OF  
31 THE NINETY-FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

32  
33           THAT the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor study  
34 methods to enhance access to immunization in Arkansas by overcoming  
35 challenges to immunization access.

1 BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT, upon request, the Arkansas Immunization  
2 Action Coalition, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of  
3 Health provide assistance to the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare,  
4 and Labor to perform this study.

5  
6 Respectfully submitted,

7  
8  
9  
10 Representative Justin Boyd  
11 District 77

12  
13  
14 By: JMB/JMB  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36