

MINNESOTA YOUTH COUNCIL



An Initiative of Minnesota Alliance With Youth

Dear Representative Freiberg,

Thank you for attending the Minnesota Youth Council Legislative hearing on the 24th of April and presenting HF2625 on the ability for minors to consent to regularly scheduled vaccines and approved COVID-19 vaccines. As youth, in particular, have lacked the access to consenting to vaccine administration, this threatens both the health of youth in Minnesota and the communities around us.

Especially during a critical time, such as in the pandemic, youth should and must have the right to consent to vaccinations. As of right now, the CDC recommends that everyone ages 5 and older receive the primary COVID-19 vaccine, with those 12 years of age and older recommended to receive the COVID-19 booster. However, a minor has no access to these life-saving vaccinations without parental consent. With this bill, children 14 years of age, and children from 12 to 13 deemed mature enough to make such a choice by a physician, will be able to receive the protections they deserve in a pandemic.

This bill would provide youth with the necessary tools to protect themselves and their communities from preventable diseases as well as build a framework for youth-informed legislation around medical care in the future. We, as a state, have set the precedent under previous legislation surrounding the rights of youth to consent to the hepatitis B vaccine or when living apart from a parent or legal guardian that access to vaccinations should be extended to youth under circumstances where there is a high risk to a disease or under extenuating circumstances where parental/guardian approval is unreasonable. Given the current risks of COVID-19 and a collective desire to protect our communities from other diseases such as measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis A, and others covered by regular vaccines, this logic should and must be extended again.

As a part of a continued effort to promote the health of our state, this bill provides the necessary components to expand access to consent to vaccines but must also be a part of a broader initiative to provide physical access to them across our state as well. A healthier state is a safer state for all Minnesotans. In addition to granting the right to youth to consent to vaccinations, we must also endeavor to inform youth of their rights in accessing medicine and how they can do so. Legislation is only as strong as the public's knowledge of their own rights and, therefore, it is imperative to inform youth about the rights they hold under the law.

Thank you for your time and continued efforts in this area. We hope to continue to work with you in the future to increase the health and well-being of youth within Minnesota.

Sincerely,

The Minnesota Youth Council