

VACCINE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE & HOW TO GET INVOLVED

CPP VACCINE MANAGEMENT SUMMIT

MAY 5TH, 2026



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Introduction and Agenda

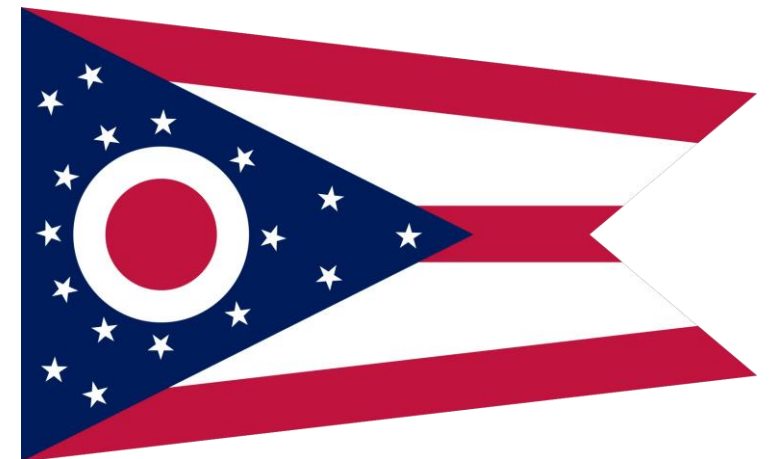
Danny Hurley

- Lobbyist, BT Strategies Group (Barnes & Thornburg)
- Clients include Ohio Chapter of AAP, Ohio Osteopathic Association, GlaxoSmithKline, and Susan G. Komen
- Past Experience: U.S. Senate, Ohio Senate, Lobbyist for 14 years
- Elected Member of Bexley City Council

Presentation Overview

- Recent Polling and National Landscape
- History of Vaccine Policy in Ohio
- Overview of Current Vaccine Laws
- Pending Legislation in Ohio General Assembly
- Talking Points and Action Items

Be Sure to Vote – Ohio's Primary is Today!



OhioAAP/BGSU 2025 Vaccine Poll

BGSU Democracy and Public Policy Research Network Poll

- 10/2 – 10/14 | 800 RV | MOE 4.5 | Weighted +10 Trump
- OhioAAP commissioned to gauge Ohio voter attitudes towards immunizations
- Results released in January, strong media coverage and reaction

Key Results and Findings

- 87% of Ohioans think its very important or important that parents have their kids immunized
- 86% of Ohioans think routine vaccines are very safe or safe for most children
- 75% of Ohioans believe that parents should be required to immunize their children
- 83% felt very confident or confident in MMR vaccine, 85% felt very confident or confident in polio vaccine (43% felt very confident or confident in COVID-19 vaccine)

Notable Takeaways

- Strong confidence in routine childhood vaccines being safe, effective, and necessary
- Feelings on COVID-19 strongly deviate from other vaccines

Current Ohio Vaccine Rates

ODH Annual Kindergarten Vaccine Assessment

- Total School Buildings – 2,097 | Total Students – 123,786 | Kindergarten, 2025/26
- Newly published state dashboard provides rates for counties, districts, and school buildings (<https://data.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/data/view/annual-ohio-kindergarten-immunization-level-assessment?visualize=true>)

Individual Vaccine Rates

- MMR – 88.2%
- DTaP – 88.5%
- Polio – 88.4%
- HepB – 91.9%
- Varicella – 87.8%

Exemption Rates

- Medical – 0.2%
- Non-Medical – 5.4%
- Unknown – 9%



ODH Director Dr. Vanderhoff Announces New Data Tool on Ohio School Immunization Rates

April 14, 2026

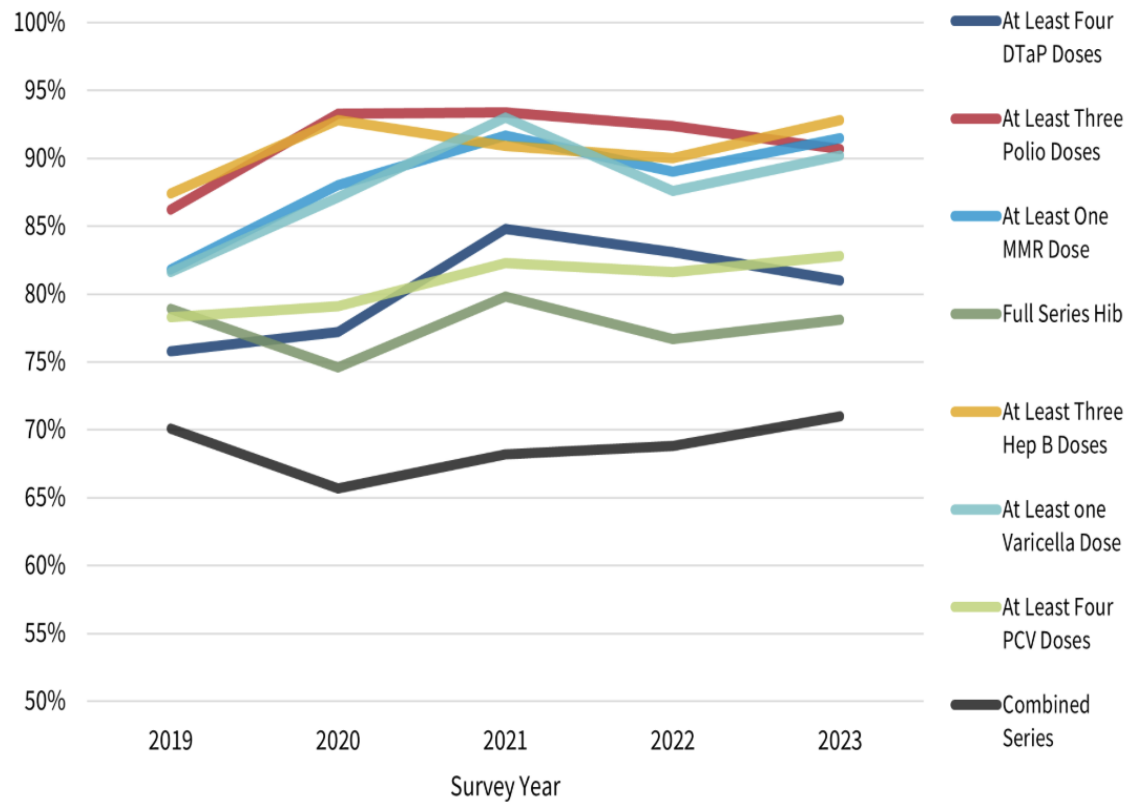
(COLUMBUS) -- Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Bruce Vanderhoff, MD, MBA, today announced the launch of a new dashboard that makes Ohio's kindergarten immunization data easily accessible to the public.

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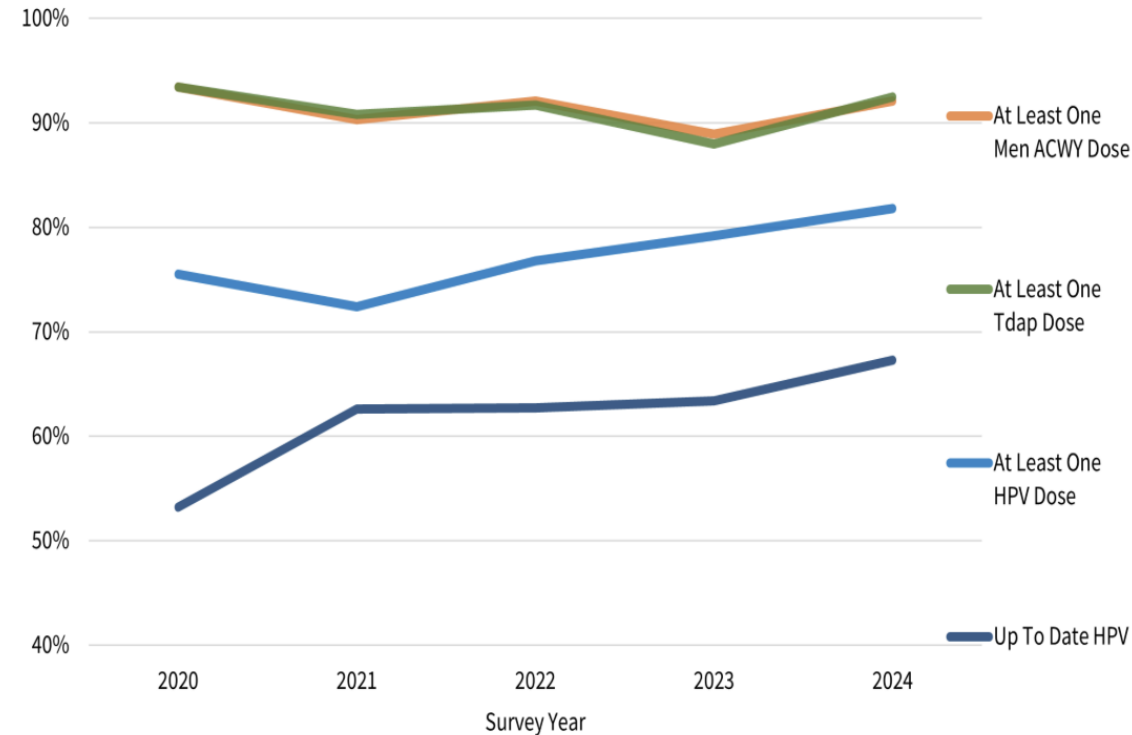


National Immunization Survey (NIS)

Ohio's vaccination coverage by 24-months for children.



NIS Data: Ohio's vaccination coverage for 13 through 17-year-old adolescents.



Source: <https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/Immunization/Immunization-Rates/>

National Immunization Policy Landscape

Federal Actions over last 12 months

- Major changes to Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and CDC Vaccine Schedule
- Ohio vaccine laws largely insulated from disruptions due to federal issues

AAP Lawsuit and Vaccine Schedule

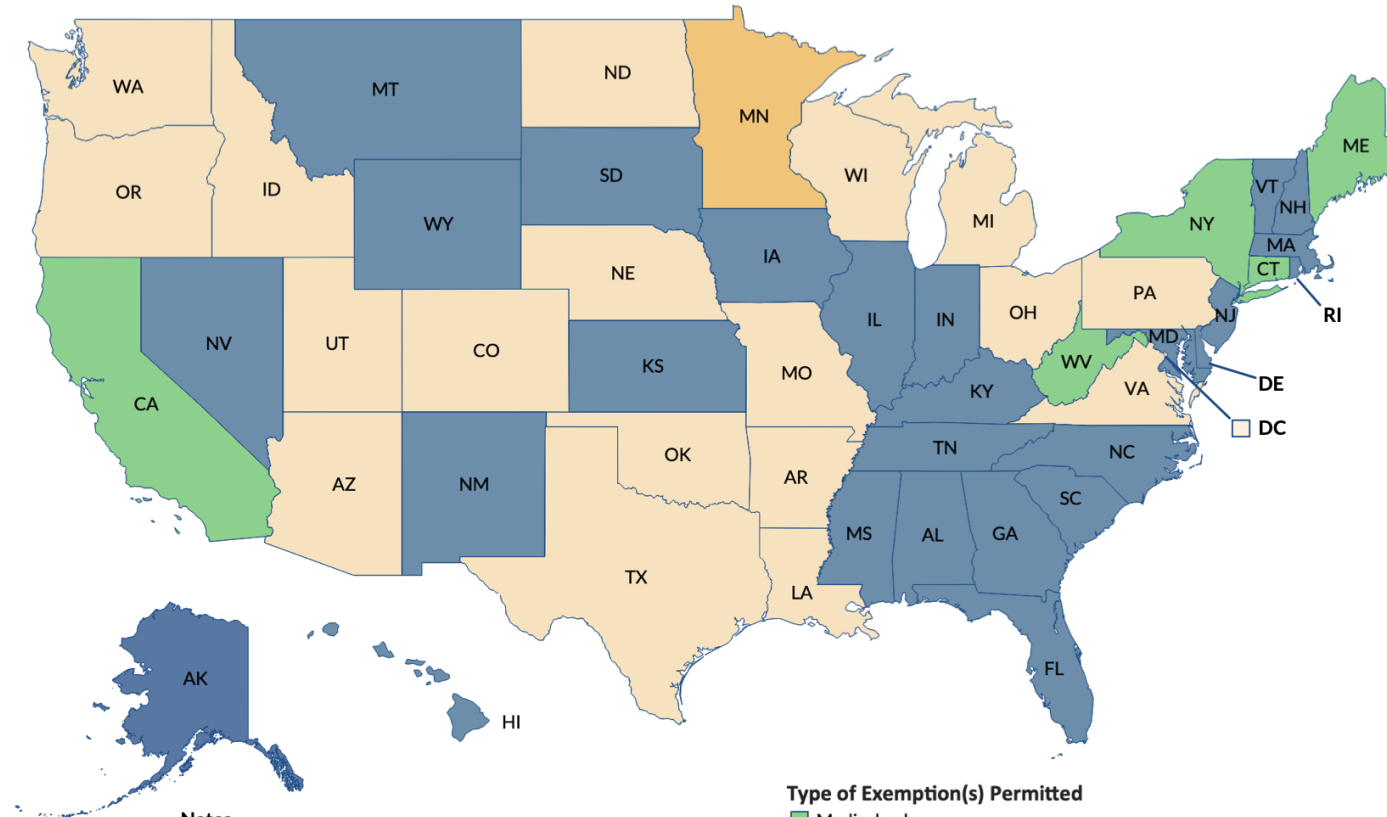
- March 2026 – Federal Judge sides with AAP and blocks changes to Vaccine Schedule
- April 2026 – RFK, Jr. updates ACIP Charter, paving way for future appointments
- May 2026 – HHS appeals lower court ruling on vaccine schedule

State Level Policy Developments

- Prior to COVID-19 pandemic, some states moved to restrict non-medical exemptions and saw a boost in vaccine rates
- More recently, several Republican states declined to enact legislation weakening vaccine laws (notably Florida and West Virginia)

Map – Exemption Policy by State

Exemptions Permitted for State Childcare and School (K-12) Immunization Requirements
May 2024



Notes

- AZ: Religious exemption for childcare only, personal belief exemption for school (K-12) only
- CO: Religious and personal belief exemptions combined under category of "nonmedical exemption"
- DC and VA: Personal belief exemption for HPV only
- MO and NE: Personal belief exemption for childcare only
- WA: Personal belief exemption not allowed for MMR

Summary

- No Non-Medical Exemptions – 5 (CA, WV, NY, CT, ME)
- Religious Only – 26
- Religious and Philosophical – 19 (includes Ohio)
- 31 States do not recognize philosophical exemptions

Current Law – Child Care Centers

R.C. 5104.014 (Medical Statement of Immunization)

- Covers Childcare Centers as well as Type A and Type B homes
- Form must be signed by provider (contains other information besides vaccine data)
- Medical and Nonmedical Exemptions Recognized

Covered Vaccines / Diseases

- Chicken Pox (Varicella)
- Diphtheria
- Haemophilus Influenzae Type B
- HepA / HepB
- Influenza
- Measles
- Mumps
- Pertussis
- Pneumococcal
- Poliomyelitis
- Rotavirus
- Rubella
- Tetanus

Must be Immunized or in 'Process of Being Immunized' against diseases. Up to provider to determine.

Current Law – K-12 Schools

R.C. 3313.671 (Proof of Required Immunizations – Exceptions)

- Generally, covers public and charter schools (does not apply to private/parochial schools)
- No standard form or process, parents can decline in writing
- Medical and Nonmedical Exemptions recognized

Covered Vaccines / Diseases

- Mumps
- Rubeola
- Rubella
- Chicken Pox (Varicella)
- Poliomyelitis
- Diphtheria
- Pertussis
- Tetanus
- HepB
- Meningococcal

Methods of Immunization Defined by ODH Pursuant to R.C. 3701.13 (Director's Journal)

Other Notable Vaccine Laws

ODH Director Journal [R.C. 3701.13(B)(4)]

- Department 'May' Approve Methods of Immunization Against Diseases in R.C. 3313.671 to 'Encourage' Vaccination Against Those Diseases
- Journal Updated on 2/4/26 (<https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/immunization/media/directors-journal-school-requirements>)
- Journal entry not tied to ACIP or CDC; future ODH Director Could Revise

Public College Entry Information

- R.C. 3701.133 requires Public Institutions of Higher Education (14 four-year schools and 23 two-year schools) to gather information on vaccine status for HepB and Meningitis for students
- Does not require vaccination, but mandates information be collected.

Recent Vaccine Law Changes

- SB 196 (135th) allows pharmacists to provide vaccines to children five and older (follows COVID-19 emergency authorization)

Relationship Between Federal and State Laws

Ohio Revised Code Mandates

- Requires vaccination against diseases, not vaccine (federal schedule tied to vaccine)
- Only mention of ACIP is in R.C. 3721.041 and 3727.19, which deals with vaccines offered to residents of nursing facilities
- Diseases Specified in ORC (ODH retains statutory journal entry)

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA)

- Enacted in 2010, included several pro-vaccine policy items
 - *First Dollar Coverage for Vaccines (ACIP-Recommended)*
 - *Preventive Services (USPSTF) Covered as Essential Health Benefits (EHB)*
 - *Funding for Coverage and Outreach*
 - *Incentives for Hospitals and Providers to Improve Vaccine Access and Rates*
- Regulatory Action by RFK, Jr. Could Jeopardize Access and Medica Coverage

Recent Immunizations Issues 2005 - 2015

Philosophical Exemption Added in 2006

- Legislation enacted to add Varicella to vaccine schedule, included expansion of non-medical exemptions to recognize religious and philosophical exemptions in Ohio
- Prior to 2006, Ohio among best states for vaccine rates (3rd in nation). After 2006, rates begin decline and outbreaks occur within 5 years

Pro-Vaccine Legislation Enacted in 2014 and 2016

- In 2009, childcare vaccine requirement rescinded due to legal issue. Legislation introduced in 2013 to restore (enacted in 2014)
- Legislation enacted in 2016 to add Meningitis to schedule; ODH administrative action in 2013 added Tdap. Rates begin to rebound, bills pass nearly unanimously

HB 559 (132nd) introduced in 2018

- Created standard process for vaccine exemptions that required providers to sign forms (modeled after Michigan and other states); introduced by State Representatives Anne Gonzales (R-Westerville) and Al Landis (R-Dover).
- Anti-vaccine groups came out in opposition in force. HB 559 dies in committee, marking end of pro-vaccine legislative trend in Ohio.

Recent Immunization Issues 2016 - Present

Before COVID-19 Pandemic

- Anti-vaccine bills begin popping up but gain little traction and are never enacted. Governor DeWine takes office in 2019 (Dr. Amy Acton appointed ODH Director)
- Discussion of potential administrative action on vaccine exemptions, but nothing materializes before COVID-19 pandemic

After COVID-19 Pandemic

- Public opinion and lawmaker attitudes towards public health orders and vaccines sharply change in Ohio. Multiple legislative attempts to reign in executive power and curb vaccine requirements
- Anti-vaccine groups begin leveraging frustration over COVID-19 to attack existing childhood vaccines. RFK, Jr visits Ohio Statehouse.

Make America Health Again Caucus

- With backing from Ohio Advocates for Medical Freedom (OAMF), State Representative Tim Barhorst (R-Fort Loramie) challenges former Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima) for House Speaker in 136th General Assembly; Huffman easily prevails and is current Speaker.
- State Representatives Jennifer Gross (R-West Chester) and Tim Barhorst (R-Fort Loramie) form MAHA Caucus in Ohio House of Representatives
- Anti-vaccine legislation has failed to gain traction due to both political and policy issues.

Pending Legislation – 136th General Assembly

House Bill 561 (Childhood Vaccines)

- Sponsored by State Representatives Melanie Miller (R-Ashland) and Monica Robb Blasdel (R-Columbiana), 20 cosponsors (all Republican), introduced October 29th, 2025; pending in Ohio House Health Committee (three hearings – 2/4, 3/18, 3/25)
- Three key provisions: requires schools to notify parents of exemptions, removes HepB from childcare series, prohibits exclusion of unvaccinated kids during outbreak
- Also establishes exemption for ‘natural immunity’

House Bill 112 (Employer and Provider Vaccine Requirements)

- Sponsored by State Representatives Jennifer Gross (R-West Chester) and Beth Lear (R-Galena), 22 cosponsors (all Republican), introduced February 18th, 2025; pending in Ohio House Judiciary Committee (one hearing – 11/5)
- Generally, prohibits employers, including hospitals, from requiring flu or other vaccines as a condition of employment; also prohibits minors from being denied medical care (including organ transplants) due to vaccine status.

Vaccine Advocacy – 136th General Assembly

Lots of Organizations (OOA, AOHC, OAMF) Holding Events to Support Immunization

Media Coverage

- Significant Media Attention following poll release and hearings on HB 561 as well as national developments

HB 561 Opposition Testimony – March 25th, 2026

- Multiple witnesses testified in opposition to HB 561 (followed proponent testimony on 5/18).
- Current whip count shows HB 561 not advancing without significant amendments. Bill sponsors open to making changes, however OAMF and other supporters will not agree

OhioAAP Statehouse Day 2026 – April 16th, 2026

- Nearly 100 pediatricians and public health advocates met with lawmakers and staff to express opposition to HB 561 and discuss vaccine safety and efficacy
- Lawmakers currently on recess and expected to return on May 12th; HB 561 and HB 112 not expected to see movement this Spring

Outlook for 2026 and Beyond

DeWine Administration and 136th General Assembly

- No vaccine-related bills are expected to see movement this year, though the MAHA Caucus is focused on other issues as well
- DeWine Administration preparing a media campaign around vaccines in hopes of boosting rates ahead of 2026/27 school year

Ohio's Next Governor and ODH Director

- Ohio voters will elect a new Governor this November – The Democratic nominee is former ODH Director Dr. Amy Acton and the presumptive Republican nominee is Vivek Ramaswamy.
- We have some insight into future ODH Directors and feel confident there will be no major administrative issues, though Ramaswamy has courted support from OAMF.

137th General Assembly

- Anti-vaccine legislation expected to resurface, though we are confident we can defeat any harmful bills

How To Get Involved

Outreach to Legislators

- Call, write, or email your state representative and state senator about pending legislation or other issues
- Easiest way for constituents to get involved in the process

Attend Meetings in District or in Columbus

- State lawmakers are very approachable and are willing to meet with constituents
- For many, this is their first elected office, and few have significant health care experience (currently there are 4 physicians, two APRN's, and a CRNA in General Assembly)
- You can also participate in advocacy days hosted by allied organizations

Testify in Committee

- We always need witnesses who can testify before key committees!

QUESTIONS?

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