

Thimerosal Information  
7/27/06  
Galen Chock, MD

SB2133 CD1 was the bill passed in 2006 by our Senate and House that would limit, then ban mercury-containing vaccines in Hawaii. The intent of the bill was to ban thimerosal, an ethyl-mercury containing preservative found in some vaccines that has been in use in the U.S. since 1930. In 2006 the bill would have focused on the inactivated multi-dose influenza vaccine for children 12 years and younger and pregnant women. In 2007, the ban would've been applied to individuals of all ages and included other vaccines that had or do contain trace amounts of thimerosal. The text of the bill can be found at the following link:

[http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessioncurrent/bills/SB2133\\_CD1\\_.pdf](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessioncurrent/bills/SB2133_CD1_.pdf)

It is alleged that thimerosal causes or contributes to the development of autism in children. To review that argument you could look at the Sensible Action For the Elimination of Mercury-Induced Neurologic Disorders' website <http://www.safeminds.org/>. A New York Times best-seller book that has promoted this idea is "Evidence of Harm: Mercury in Vaccines and the Autism Epidemic: A Medical Controversy" by David Kirby.

The Institute of Medicine in its May 17, 2004 report entitled "Immunization Safety Review: Vaccines and Autism", refutes the claim that thimerosal causes autism. This reference can be found at the following links: <http://www.iom.edu/CMS/3793/4705/20155.aspx>, <http://www.nap.edu/books/030909237X/html/>.

The Hawaii Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Hawaii Academy of Family Physicians, the Hawaii Medical Association, the Department of Health and many others testified against passage of this bill. We are fortunate that Governor Lingle heard that message and responded appropriately by vetoing SB2133 CD1. Her July 10, 2006 veto message is an informative and concise summary that all physicians should read. It can be found at: <http://www.hawaii.gov/gov/leg/2006/gov/leg/2006/Folder.2006-04-19.5231>.

Physicians should use their professional judgment when administering vaccines and should incorporate the patient as a partner in treatment plans. It is not unreasonable to educate patients about thimerosal. An educational resource from the Vaccine Education Center based at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia is found at: [http://www.chop.edu/vaccine/images/vec\\_thimerosal.pdf](http://www.chop.edu/vaccine/images/vec_thimerosal.pdf)

Governor Lingle's veto has put a stop to SB2133 CD1 for 2006, however, physicians and others in the medical community should remain watchful for further activities that would seek to legislatively restrict FDA approved and CDC recommended vaccines.