



## Hawaii Chapter

### Hawaii Chapter

1319 Punahou Street  
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Organization: Hawaii Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (HAAP)

Measure: HB3154, Relating to Health

Committee: HLT; Representative Josh Green, MD, Vice-Chair

Saturday, February 11, 2006

Time: 9:00 am

Room 329

February 9, 2006

### Testimony in Opposition to HB3154, Relating to Health

Dear Representatives Green and Arakaki:

As Vice-President of the Hawaii Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and as representative of that organization's many Hawaii pediatricians, I urge you to oppose House Bill 3154. If this legislation is enacted it would have the potential to do the following harm:

1. **Perpetuate false and misleading information that vaccines are not safe.** Parents may see the banning of thimerosal as an admission that vaccine safety oversight is inadequate. The claim of thimerosal's ill effects on the neurological development of infants is based on studies of methyl mercury. Thimerosal does not contain methyl mercury. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, nearly all methyl mercury exposures in the U.S. occur through eating fish and shellfish. This issue has been well studied. There is no scientific evidence that ethyl mercury in the form of thimerosal in the doses administered in vaccines causes any risk to health.
2. **Potentially result in on-going vaccine shortages or inability to deliver care,** as health care providers are forced to seek other vaccine formulations. Only 10% of the 80 million doses of injectible influenza vaccine for 2005-2006 were thimerosal-free. This could potentially limit Hawaii's ability to immunize infants if an influenza pandemic were to strike.
3. **Lead to increased costs for vaccines.** Thimerosal free vaccines can be as much as 25-30 % higher in cost.
4. **Add more complexity to our present vaccine delivery system.** It is extremely difficult for providers to stay current with the ever-changing nature of immunizations. The additional requirements imposed by HB 3154 will only serve to complicate an already taxed system of vaccine delivery.
5. **Unnecessarily expose our physicians to civil action and litigation.** Our pediatric community is already struggling with the issues of medical malpractice and litigation and yet manages to deliver high quality health care consistent with the Medical Home concept. One should not add further burden to their already over burdened task.

Vaccine manufacturers have revised their manufacturing processes to allow production of most vaccines in either a reduced thimerosal or thimerosal-free formulation. This was done as a precaution to address theoretical concerns, not due to any scientific evidence of harm.

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Pediatricians in Hawaii are well versed in the thimerosal issue and are capable of communicating this information to the parents of the younger patients they serve such that the parents can make the appropriate decisions for the health of their children. Legislation on this issue is unnecessary and could lead to more harm than benefit to the children of Hawaii.

I urge you to trust in the conclusions of the scientific community, including the Institute of Medicine, that the scientific evidence does not identify any connection between thimerosal containing vaccines and human illness or disease. I also urge you to trust in the pediatric community's assessment of the available scientific information and our mission to deliver only the finest health care to the children of Hawaii. In that light, I speak strongly against the passage of HB 3154.

Respectfully submitted:

Galen YK Chock MD