

HCS#2 HB 131 -- IMMUNIZATIONS

SPONSOR: Cooper, 155 (Schaaf)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Health Care Policy by a vote of 11 to 0.

Beginning April 1, 2007, this substitute requires that immunizations administered to children under the age of three or knowingly pregnant women cannot contain more than one microgram of mercury per five-tenths milliliter dose. Insurers doing business in Missouri that provide coverage for immunizations on a fee schedule or a percentage reimbursement basis are required to reimburse for immunizations not containing mercury at the same percentage rate of the usual and customary charges provided for immunizations containing mercury or other preservatives beginning April 1, 2007. The Director of the Department of Health and Senior Services is required to exempt the use of a vaccine from compliance with this requirement in the event of a public health emergency.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on General Revenue Fund in FY 2006, FY 2007, and FY 2008. Estimated Income on Other State Funds of \$0 to \$8,000 in FY 2006, \$0 in FY 2007, and \$0 in FY 2008.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that mercury is a neurotoxin, and there is a concern that some children develop autism due to exposure to mercury. Thimerosal is a mercury-containing preservative that is used in multi-dose vials of some vaccines. Children are exposed to thimerosal and mercury when they receive vaccinations from multi-dose vials. There are also questions about the effect of mercury on the aging process. Eliminating mercury-based preservatives from multi-dose vials of vaccines will eliminate one way in which children and adults are exposed to mercury. Individuals should be given information about whether the vaccine they are receiving contains mercury-based preservatives.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Schaaf; Dr. Roy Holand; Dr. Alan Clark; Lujene Clark; Shelly Hume; Rita Shreffler; Keith Mueller; Anthony Johnston; and Concerned Women for America of Missouri.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say parents should be allowed an exemption from required vaccines for their children if the person administering the vaccine cannot prove that it is mercury-free.

Others testifying on the bill was Missouri First.

Amy Woods, Senior Legislative Analyst