

WA Board of Health TAG Votes Against Recommending COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement for Daycare and School

COVID-19 vaccine school requirements are still possible if the full board votes to add the shots despite the TAG's recommendation.

KIRKLAND, WA, USA, February 26, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Informed Choice WA announced today that they support the decision of the WA State Board of Health's (BOH) Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to not recommend that the BOH add COVID-19 vaccination to daycare and school requirements.



WA BOH Advisory Group Recommends Against COVID-19 School Mandates

The BOH is authorized by law (RCW 28A.210.140) to decide what vaccines children in the state will be required to have for daycare and school entry. The law includes religious and medical exemptions for all vaccine requirements, and personal exemptions for all but the MMR.

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TAG member

The BOH follows a formal process to create rules related to the RCW to add new shot requirements. The BOH recently formed this Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to consider COVID-19 shots for school entry, utilizing a formal set of nine criteria to guide their review. The BOH and Department of Health (DOH) selected presenters to speak to the TAG about the nine criteria over the course of three meetings. Informed Choice WA has posted their [response to all nine criteria on their website](#).

The full question put to the TAG on February 24, 2022, was:

“Do you recommend the State Board of Health initiate rulemaking to add COVID-19 vaccine to school entry requirements (WAC 246-105-030).”

The secret TAG vote consisted of 6 "yes" votes, 7 "no" votes, and 4 "unsure".

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Informed Choice Washington (ICWA)

The eighteen TAG members included two Board of Health members: Dr. Thomas Pendergrass, and WA State Chief Science Officer Dr. Tao Kwan-Gett who represents Secretary of Health Shah on the BOH when the secretary is unable to attend. Both are vocal and active promoters of COVID-19 vaccination for children. The remaining sixteen TAG members either work in public health, in public schools or with a public outreach organization strongly aligned or affiliated with public health. All of the presenters who provided the information about COVID-19 shots were also with public health agencies, or with entities closely aligned with public health. No presentations from experts with opposing viewpoints were invited to participate.

Nevertheless, the majority of the TAG members voted against recommending the shots be added to the schedule. One TAG member said after the vote, "Had I been asked this question a year ago, I would have had a completely different response. I was adamantly pro-mandate and full use of police powers and in complete emergency response mode. And I and others learned a lot over this last year, and it's the virus that's been teaching us. And I think part of that message is to be a lot more humble about what we know and what we don't know."

Members of the public watching the meetings voiced their relief at the final vote, as well as their concern about the selection process for both the TAG members and the presenters. "Although much about the TAG presentations was biased, irrelevant, or even false," said Xavier Figueroa, PhD, advisor to ICWA, "my observation was that the non-BOH TAG members were earnest and thoughtful in their attempts to process the data they were given and to make the best decisions they could. The two BOH TAG members claimed that having an outside moderator gave them the right to participate as TAG members, but since their bias toward vaccinating children was made clear, and since they are two of the ten who will be making final decisions, it did not seem right that one of them also had TAG voting rights. [The TAG had eighteen members and seventeen votes were cast each time.] When all members of a committee speak with one voice on a complex medical issue such as vaccination requirements, one has to be concerned about the quality of the process and the information used."

Figueroa went on to say, "Of much greater concern, over the entirety of these BOH TAG presentations, has been the lack of voices that provide a much more critical review of the effects of SARs-CoV-2 and the Pfizer and Moderna injections on the pediatric population. The presentations to the TAG have been limited in scope and dismissive or minimizing of data that suggests serious safety concerns. The risk to school-age children of dying or becoming hospitalized by SARs-CoV-2 are equivalent or lower than seasonal flu, yet Dr. Pendergrass is pushing for a requirement to inoculate this population with Emergency Use Authorization products. The risk-to-benefit ratio is all risk with no benefit for children for these shots. I have

heard that 'One death from a preventable disease is one death too many', but 'One death from an optional medical product is one death too many' applies to a greater extent. These are avoidable self-inflicted wounds we are causing to our children, and we are going to see what the effects are only after the fact. Lack of information or too little information runs counter to the medical and common law principle of "First, Do No Harm".

Reviews of the materials presented to the TAG are underway and being made available at [InformedChoiceWA.org](https://www.informedchoicewa.org).

Overall, the TAG members indicated there was still too much unknown about the ability of the shots to reduce transmission, especially in school settings, too much unknown about future SARS-CoV variants, and that the administrative burden on schools may not be worth the small increase in COVID-19 vaccination rates any requirement may prompt. It was acknowledged that there was significant vocal opposition to school vaccine mandates, and that trust in public health vaccination policies may be undermined by a COVID-19 vaccine mandate at this time.

The final decision about adding COVID-19 shots to daycare and school entry requirements in WA State will be made during either the March or April WA BOH meetings. Information will be posted at <https://sboh.wa.gov/meetings/meeting-information>.

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