

## Physician Group Calls for End to Mandatory Vaccines

Michael Devitt

A leading national physician organization has called for a moratorium on all government mandated vaccines, going so far as to pass a resolution asking for an end to mandatory vaccination programs at their annual meeting.

In October, at their 57th Annual Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, members of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons voted on a resolution calling for "a moratorium on vaccine mandates and for physicians to insist upon truly informed consent for the use of vaccines." The resolution passed without a single dissenting vote.

"This is not a vote against vaccines," said AAPS Executive Director Jane Orient, MD. In recent months, Dr. Orient has testified before Congress on the safety of the government's vaccine policy. "This resolution only attempts to halt blanket vaccine mandates by government agencies and school districts that give no consideration for the rights of the parents or the individual medical condition of the child."

At issue is the policy of mandating immunizations for children. Forty-two states have mandatory vaccine policies; in many cases, children are required to have as many as 22 shots before they start elementary school.

Some school districts also require that students be inoculated for diseases such as hepatitis B, even though children are at a very low risk for catching the disease. Hepatitis B is commonly spread through unprotected sex or the sharing of intravenous needles. According to statements posted on the AAPS website ([www.aapsonline.org](http://www.aapsonline.org)), children under the age of 14 are three times more likely to suffer adverse effects from the hepatitis B vaccine than to catch the disease itself.

"Our children face the possibility of death or serious long-term adverse effects from mandated vaccines that aren't necessary or that have very limited benefits," added Dr. Orient. "AAPS believes that parents, with the advice of their doctors, should make decisions about their children's medical care - not government bureaucrats. This resolution affirms that position."

The AAPS' resolution reads:

"WHEREAS: The statement of Patients' Freedoms adopted by the Assembly at the 47th annual meeting of AAPS in 1990 provides that "Patients have the freedom ... to refuse medical treatment even if it is recommended by their physician and to be informed about their medical condition, the risks and benefits of treatment, and appropriate alternatives" and

"WHEREAS: There are increasing numbers of mandatory childhood vaccines, to which children are often subjected without meaningful informed consent, including information about potential adverse side effects; and

"WHEREAS: Parents who exercise their freedom to refuse one or more vaccines may be subjected

to penalties ranging from deprivation of the right to enroll their child in school, to threats of removing the child from parental custody and forcible vaccination; and

"WHEREAS: Safety testing of many vaccines is limited and the data are unavailable for independent scrutiny, so that mass vaccination is equivalent to human experimentation and subject to the Nuremberg Code, which requires voluntary informed consent; and

"WHEREAS: The process of approving and "recommending" vaccines is tainted with conflicts of interest;

"BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED: That AAPS calls for a moratorium on vaccine mandates and for physicians to insist upon truly informed consent for the use of vaccines."

*Michael Devitt*  
*Senior Associate Editor*

JANUARY 2001