

How Changes to Vaccination Requirements for Schools May Threaten Cancer Patients and Survivors

ACS CAN urges the Florida Department of Health to maintain immunization recommendations and evidence-based requirements.

December 30, 2025 By American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Tallahassee, FL. – December 12, 2025 — The following statement can be attributed to Susan Harbin, Florida senior director of government relations for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), regarding Florida’s proposed revisions to Rule 64D-3.046, related to immunization requirements for school entry:

“We are concerned with the proposed changes to vaccines required for school entry, including changes that appear to eliminate certain vaccine requirements in a way that strays from evidence-based childhood immunization schedules. Vaccinations are an essential part of care for people with cancer and their families. ACS CAN advocates for science-based policies that improve access to vaccines that prevent and treat cancer as well as protect people living with cancer.

“In addition, ACS CAN opposes the proposed change to Florida’s current religious exemption form to include exemptions based on a moral or ethical belief. There is evidence that non-medical exemptions can negatively impact vaccination rates, and states that permit religious, philosophical or personal belief exemptions, or have a less rigorous process for non-medical exemptions have seen a decrease in vaccination adherence.

“Many individuals in Florida, especially cancer patients, have weakened immune systems that make them more vulnerable to communicable illnesses. Some cannot be vaccinated, or vaccines may be less effective for them, particularly those with blood cancers or undergoing treatments like chemotherapy, long-term steroids, certain immunotherapies, or stem cell and bone marrow transplants. This is why strong community immunity is critical. The more healthy Floridians who are vaccinated, the better we can protect our loved ones, neighbors and community members who cannot be.

“On behalf of cancer patients and survivors who call Florida their home, ACS CAN urges the Department of Health to reconsider and ultimately reject the proposed changes to the immunization requirements to enter schools, as they will reduce the number of children that are

up-to-date on recommended vaccines, decrease community immunity, put vulnerable populations at risk, and contribute further to the current uptick in preventable illness.”

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