



February 17, 2022

The Honorable Brenda Landwehr
Chair, House Committee on Health and Human Services
300 SW Tenth Street, Room 352-S
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: Opposition to House Bill 2498

Dear Chair Landwehr and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in opposition to House Bill 2498, which would weaken the ability of Kansas public health officials to implement protective vaccination policies in schools and childcare settings.

The mission of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) is to cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease, and myeloma and improve the quality of life for the more than 1.3 million people in the United States living with blood cancer, and their families.

LLS urges your committee to oppose HB 2498 – one of several harmful vaccination proposals under consideration in the state legislature – because it would undermine evidence-based, public health vaccine requirement policies that support the wellbeing of those facing cancer.

At LLS, our top priority is the safety of blood cancer patients and survivors. We know that they are at increased risk of serious illness and death from COVID-19. However, LLS' own research shows that as many as 1 in 4 blood cancer patients may not be able to mount the same robust antibody response as healthy individuals after being vaccinated against COVID-19ⁱ, making it even more important for those around them to be vaccinated.

Further, higher vaccination rates mean lower hospitalization rates. That reduces strain on our health care system and helps to ensure that hospitals can care for patients with other, non-COVID emergencies. No patient with a serious or chronic health condition such as a blood cancer should be forced to delay, avoid, or abandon treatment or care because our health system has been overwhelmed by cases that could have been largely avoided through vaccination.

We all must do our part to ensure our actions keep the most vulnerable around us safe, including adults and children fighting cancer. As such, we respectfully urge your committee to protect immunocompromised cancer patients by opposing this effort to diminish proven public health strategies like vaccine requirements.



Thank you again for your deliberation on this important healthcare issue. Please contact me at dana.bacon@lls.org or 612.308.0479 for questions and further information on LLS and our position on this issue.

Sincerely,

Dana Bacon
Regional Director, Government Affairs
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

ⁱ Greenberger, L.M., Saltzman, L.A., Senefeld, J.W., Johnson, P.W., DeGennaro, L.J., Nichols, G.L., Antibody response to SARS-CoV-2 vaccines in patients with hematologic malignancies, *Cancer Cell* (2021), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccell.2021.07.012>.