



DATE: February 5, 2025
TO: Joint Standing Committee on Health & Human Services
FROM: Samantha Warren, UMS Chief External & Governmental Affairs Officer
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RE: **LD 93, Expanding Universal Immunization Program To Adults**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Legislature's Committee on Health & Human Services:

When the Legislature removed exemptions to immunization requirements for all students in 2019, the University of Maine System (UMS) recommended that eligibility in the State's Universal Childhood Immunization Program be expanded to those attending Maine colleges and universities so this policy change would not unintentionally create barriers to postsecondary education and workforce training. Vaccine-preventable diseases like measles do not discriminate based on age, and nor should Maine's immunization access program.

In 2021, in response to student concerns related to the cost of student health insurance and changes to federal policy, our System eliminated its health insurance verification requirement for most students, making free access to required immunizations even more critical for students without adequate coverage.

More than half of our System's undergraduate students have financial need, as evidenced by their eligibility for federal Pell grants. Furthermore, 40% of all UMS students are 25 and older and may not have recently had access to the State's childhood immunization program. All born after 1956, degree-seeking, and attending at least some of their classes in person are required to comply with Maine's school immunization requirements.

For these students and others who may wish to pursue a door-opening degree through Maine's public universities in the future, the expansion proposed in this bill would afford better access to required vaccines, high-quality postsecondary education, and the Maine workforce. On their behalf, we encourage your support of LD 93.