

Alcohol/Drug Abuse Women's Center  
Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries of  
Greater Houston (ACAM)  
Amerigroup  
Association for Family and  
Community Integrity, Inc.  
Behavioral Health Alliance of Texas  
Bering Omega Community Services  
Care for Elders  
Career and Recovery Resources, Inc.  
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese  
of Galveston-Houston  
ChildBuilders  
CHILDREN AT RISK  
Children's Defense Fund  
Coalition for the Homeless of  
Houston/Harris Co., Inc.  
Coalition of Behavioral Health Services  
Collaborative for Children  
Communities In Schools  
Community Family Centers  
Community Health Choice, Inc.  
Covenant House of Texas  
DePelchin Children's Center  
Depression & BiPolar Support Alliance  
Greater Houston (DBSA)  
Easter Seals of Greater Houston, Inc.  
Family Services of Greater Houston  
Fort Bend Regional Council on  
Substance Abuse, Inc.  
Gateway to Care  
Good Neighbor Healthcare Center  
Greater Houston Healthconnect  
Gulf Coast CHIP Coalition  
Harris County Healthcare Alliance  
Healthcare for the Homeless-Houston  
Houston Area Association for the Education  
of Young Children  
Houston Area Community Services  
Houston Area Women's Center  
Houston Center for Literacy (formerly Houston  
READ Commission)  
Houston Food Bank  
IntraCare Behavioral Health  
Jewish Family Service  
Jewish Federation of Greater Houston  
KIPP Houston  
League of Women Voters Houston  
Legacy Community Health, Services Inc.  
Lesbian Health Initiative  
Memorial Hermann Healthcare System  
Mental Health America  
of Greater Houston  
NAMI Gulf Coast  
NAMI Metropolitan Houston  
NAMI West Houston, Inc.  
National Association of Social Workers-Houston  
Neighborhood Centers, Inc.  
Neuhauser Education Center  
New Hope Housing, Inc.  
Northwest Assistance Ministries  
Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast  
Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services  
Santa Maria Hostel, Inc.  
SEARCH  
Spaulding for Children  
Spring Branch Community Health Center  
St. Luke's Episcopal Health Charities  
Texans Together Education Fund  
Texas Children's Hospital  
Texas Medical Center-Women's Health  
Network, Inc.  
The Arc of Greater Houston  
The Foundation for Hope Village  
The Immunization Partnership  
The Methodist Hospital System  
The Network of Behavioral  
Health Providers  
The Non-Profit Housing Corporation of Greater  
Houston  
The Rose  
The Women's Home  
United Way of Greater Houston  
Wesley Community Center  
YMCA of Greater Houston

# One Voice Texas

## A Collaborative for Health & Human Services



### Healthcare: Immunizations/Vaccinations-Vaccine Exemptions

Position Statement Approved by One Voice Texas: August 10, 2012

#### Issue/Concern:

Vaccinations are an invisible investment that prevents debilitating diseases from ever occurring. Exempting individuals from vaccinations leaves them vulnerable to disease and death and entire communities at high risk for infectious diseases.

#### Specific Policy Recommendation(s):

- Ensure that the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is the only agency empowered to grant exemptions to vaccination.
- Require DSHS to conduct an annual study on the impact of vaccine exemptions and the reasons why individuals claim exemptions.

#### How Will This Impact State Funding? What Can Be Accomplished?

These policies will promote public health savings by promoting immunization, preventing the spread of vaccine-preventable disease, and avoiding outbreaks and public health emergencies.

#### Others That Support These Recommendations:

Texas Pediatric Society, Texas Public Health Coalition

#### Supporting Facts/Research Resources:

1. Recently, the exemption policy for the law that requires all college students to receive the meningitis vaccine prior to school entry was changed. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) passed a rule that allows a college student who wishes to claim an exemption from the requirement to download a form from the THECB website, as opposed to requesting a form from DSHS. This process makes it easier for a student to claim an exemption. In order to safeguard the process and ensure that mechanisms are in place to monitor vaccine exemptions and capture data for disease prevention purposes, DSHS should be the only agency empowered to grant exemptions.
2. Studying the number of individuals seeking exemptions in Texas will benefit public health planning efforts by identifying pockets of need and assessing the risk of disease. Research could also aid in driving targeted educational efforts to change immunization behavior.

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