



Why Influenza Vaccine Mandates are Ineffective & Unwise Public Policy

From 2001 to 2007 less than 200 non-autism vaccine injury claims were filed annually with the federal [Vaccine Injury Compensation Program \(VICP\)](#). By 2010 reported claims have almost tripled, with the increase in claims largely due to adult influenza vaccine injury claims.¹ According to the U.S. Department of Justice approximately 65% of claims filed with the VICP are for alleged injuries from influenza vaccine,² with two-thirds of those claims being adult claims.

WHAT RESEARCH DEMONSTRATES...

- Influenza viruses constantly evolve and, depending upon the year, the flu shot may or may not match strains associated with reported influenza cases;³
- The influenza vaccine is **less than 70 percent effective** in preventing influenza,⁴ and like all pharmaceutical products, use of influenza vaccine is not without risk of vaccine injury;⁵
- Influenza rarely kills healthy people under age 65 and 5 to 20 percent of Americans may experience type A or type B influenza in an average flu season⁶, with the majority having uncomplicated cases. The natural immunity developed from influenza protects people during future influenza outbreaks;⁷
- Over 200 viruses cause influenza and influenza-like illness and can produce similar symptoms. It is estimated that 80% of flu-like illness reported during the “flu season” is not caused by influenza.⁸ Some researchers estimate that, at best, vaccines might be effective against only influenza A and B, which represent about 10% of all circulating viruses.⁹
- Most influenza studies are poorly designed and have failed to demonstrate that influenza vaccine is effective or safe;^{10 11}
- Out of 308 million Americans, CDC estimates that about 12,000 deaths were associated with influenza in 2009, a pandemic year;¹²
- Influenza-related deaths usually involve bacterial pneumonia complications, which rarely occur in healthy children and adults;¹³
- Influenza transmission can be prevented or reduced in home and health care settings with hand washing, masking, and separating sick and healthy persons;^{14 15}

WHY MANDATES WON'T WORK...

- Surveys reveal that 60-70% of Americans do not want to get a flu shot even in pandemic years^{16 17} and more than 50% of American parents are concerned about vaccine safety in general;¹⁸
- Studies reveal that 60% of health care professionals do not want to get influenza shots and are concerned about the vaccine's ineffectiveness and side effects;¹⁹
- Threatening and forcing Americans to get vaccinated, including firing health care workers who refuse flu shots,²⁰ will further erode public trust in vaccines and public health policies;^{21 22 23}

- The tax dollars spent to purchase, distribute and enforce use of flu shots will guarantee big profits for drug companies but will not guarantee a healthier population,^{24 25 26}

NVIC'S POSITION:

One size-fits-all vaccine mandates do not recognize biodiversity and the fact that individuals have unique biological and genetic factors that can make them more or less susceptible to suffering a vaccine reaction, injury or death. NVIC does not advocate for or against use of vaccines but defends the ethical principle of informed consent to medical risk-taking, including the right for all Americans to make informed, voluntary decisions about vaccination for themselves or their children.²⁷ We maintain that every individual has the human right to be informed about the risks and complications associated with infectious diseases and vaccines and make a voluntary decision about whether or not to use every government recommended vaccine, a few vaccines or no vaccines at all.

Over 200 viruses cause influenza and influenza-like illness, which produce the same symptoms (fever, headache, aches and pains, cough and runny noses). Without laboratory tests, doctors cannot tell the two illnesses apart. Both last for days and rarely lead to death or serious illness. At best, vaccines might be effective against only influenza A and B, which represent about 10% of all circulating viruses. Each year, the World Health Organization recommends which viral strains should be included in vaccinations for the forthcoming season.

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