

Chickenpox Vaccine Exclusion
Livonia Public Schools
By Mande Ordaz
5/17/17

Hello, my name is Mande Ordaz. My husband and I reside in Livonia and are the parents of four growing boys. They all received every recommended vaccine at the recommended times until our youngest son, Armando, suffered a 30-min. seizure at 6 mo. of age one month after his 2nd round of vaccines. This incident compelled me to stop vaccinating all of my children.

~~In part due to neurological damage from vaccines, today Armando is a 7 yr.-old who functions developmentally as a non-verbal, autistic 2 yr.-old battling a life-threatening form of epilepsy for which there is no cure. Every day he attends 4hrs. of intense, 1-on-1 therapy just to learn simple skills such as following verbal commands and holding my hand to walk without dropping to the ground and bolting away.~~

This past March, I received a phone call from the principal of my 10-yr.-old son, Alonzo, on a Friday after school to inform me that 3 students in different classes of his school had been diagnosed with chickenpox. She explained that because Alonzo had not received his second dose of the chickenpox vaccination, he would be excluded for "21

days after onset of the last confirmed case.” Our only recourse would be to vaccinate (with a live virus...which could be transmissible to my immune-compromised son), or get bloodwork to prove he had immunity. ~~I was torn.~~ I felt like I was being put into a corner to make a decision that could harm my child. This is what I would consider coercion. ~~Several other parents in the school felt forced to get the vaccine to return to school.~~

~~Despite my degree in Early Childhood Education, there was no way I could replicate or continue his education at home.~~ ^{Alonzo} He was isolated for seven consecutive days while he attempted to understand his math lessons on his own and keep-up with spelling. There was even an after-school activity he had been looking forward to, but was not allowed to attend. ~~I had to approach the principal to ask for a plan to continue some sort of educational effort at home.~~

We went to the school to pick-up his schoolwork and he had to wait in the van alone while I did my best to answer the questions of his classmates as to why Alonzo was missing so many days of school without being sick. This meant that the entire class was potentially privy to his private medical history, which is supposed to be protected under HIPAA & FERPA. ~~Fortunately,~~ we were able to prove immunity ~~to the disease with blood work~~ by spending our time and money on a blood test. Still, he

ended up returning to school only 3 days sooner than the required exclusion period.

In retrospect, I guarantee that keeping a healthy, 10-yr.-old boy isolated at home away from his peers, school work, and regular routine for up to 21 days is not the best solution to preventing the spread of what was once a normal, childhood illness. ~~If another child in the school comes down with any other illnesses, such as strep, it is my decision as a parent whether to send my child to school.~~ If my child is sick, I keep him home.

Conversely, if my child is healthy, I expect him to be in school. My right as a parent to decide what is best for my child should not be usurped by the local health department, especially when there is no public health threat.

I urge you to please maintain and protect my parental right to make the best medical decisions for my child that do not exclude, isolate, or discriminate him from his right to a free and appropriate education. Please support HB 4425 & 4426. Thank you!