



Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Testimony by Mammen Sam, MD
Opposing Senate Bill 407 by Sen. Mayes Middleton
April 9, 2025

Hello, I'm Dr. Mammen Sam, a hospitalist in Pearland, representing the Texas Medical Association and Texas Pediatric Society. Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in opposition** to Senate Bill 407.

As physicians, we want a strong health care workforce in Texas, and we appreciate the difficult balance health care facilities face in protecting patients from vaccine-preventable disease while accommodating religious beliefs.

Our concern is how to prevent a facility from being forced to close or reduce services due to a vaccine-preventable outbreak. This would be especially detrimental to rural or small communities where available health care could be hours away.

Health care workers are at high risk of work-related exposure to vaccine-preventable illnesses. While school districts suffering a flu outbreak can be temporarily closed, health care doesn't have that option and must use other public health measures.

Texas is still fighting a measles outbreak, with the loss of two children and dozens of others hospitalized. An unvaccinated health care worker who is exposed to measles must isolate for 21 days. Having multiple staff out for three weeks makes a noticeable impact on an emergency department or practice for a community, resulting in increases in:

- Delayed care;
- Referrals;
- Health care spending; and
- Risk of health care worker burnout and injury.

We anticipate this impact with SB 407. To help alleviate these outbreak-related workforce challenges, the state could establish a funding and recruiting mechanism to bring in health care workers who are not at risk.

Texas physicians look forward to working with this legislature to keep health care facilities open and safe for our workforce and patients.

Thank you for your time.