



STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY 12224

APPROVAL # 107
CHAPTER # 829

December 30, 2022

MEMORANDUM filed with Senate Bill 6541-A, entitled:

“AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to protecting the confidentiality of vaccine information”

A P P R O V E D

This legislation limits the sharing of immunization information between the State and the federal government and would prevent disclosure of personal information related to immunization or lead levels in response to any legal process, administrative action, or proceeding. The bill also provides that absent informed consent, a vaccine navigator shall not use, disclose, or maintain personal information except as necessary to deliver an immunization. Finally, this bill would prevent long-term storage of immunization passport information without consent.

Immunizations are invaluable public health tools, and my administration has prioritized addressing vaccine hesitancy throughout the State. Ensuring that personal information related to immunizations is not widely shared will help some individuals feel more comfortable taking the vaccine. However, the bill, as written, could have far-reaching effects that would hinder our ability to work with the federal government to respond to public health emergencies. Without amendments, this legislation could also hinder vaccination fraud investigations and prosecutions, which is contrary to the goals of the “Truth in Vaccination” bill I signed into law in 2021. Lastly, this bill would prevent the Department of Health from continuing its critical work to ensure our most vulnerable New Yorkers are protected through vaccine mandates for health care professionals and nursing home employees.

I have reached an agreement with the Legislature to address these concerns, while still ensuring there are safeguards in place to protect individuals’ identifiable information from being disclosed in harmful ways. The agreement will allow the sharing of immunization data with the federal government when it is necessary to protect the public health, or other stringent criteria are met, and will ensure that State and local governments have the tools available to continue to address vaccine fraud and mandates. As part of this agreement, identifiable information collected from vaccine navigators will be protected from disclosure, and any entity that requires proof of Covid-19 vaccination must also accept physical proof. On the basis of this agreement, I am pleased to sign this bill into law.

This bill is approved.

Ruth Hochul