

Rep. Holand sponsors legislation to protect young children from potentially dangerous immunizations

Legislation would require immunizations to be free of mercury preservative

JEFFERSON City – Studies have linked an increase in autism spectrum disorders with the administrations of immunizations containing mercury and Rep. Roy Holand, R-Springfield, hopes to protect Missouri's young people from this potential danger with legislation he has sponsored that would prohibit these potentially dangerous immunizations.

Rep. Holand will discuss his legislation in detail during a press conference scheduled for Thursday March 4 at 12:45 p.m. in the House Lounge.

House Bill 852 would prohibit immunizations administered to children less than eight years old from containing mercury preservatives, including thimerosal. If passed by the legislature, this requirement would go into effect January 1, 2006. In addition, the bill would require insurers licensed in Missouri that provide coverage for immunizations to reimburse for immunizations not containing mercury.

"This is an important piece of legislation that would remove a significant threat to our young people," said House Speaker Catherine Hanaway. "This is an issue that has been ongoing since 1999 and we, as a state, have the opportunity to legislate the first prohibition in the nation on immunizations containing heavy metal preservatives. It is crucial that we remove this potential risk to the health and well-being of our children."

Currently, Nebraska and Iowa also are considering similar legislation to deal with this issue. In addition, some pharmaceutical companies have already complied on their own after the 1999 recommendation of The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Food and Drug Administration, and the American Academy of Pediatrics to remove mercury from all vaccines.

"The risk involved with having mercury-based preservatives in our vaccines is entirely too great," said Rep. Holand. "We cannot take the chance that even one of our children will develop autism because of an immunization that is meant to help, not harm.

My legislation will provide us with the safeguard we need to keep our children protected from this threat."

House Bill 852 has received unanimous approval from the House Health Care Policy Committee and now awaits discussion on the House floor