



Wellbeing

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Opting Out: The Moral Right

The issue of “forced vaccination” is becoming one of the most widely discussed public health and civil liberty issues in America today. At the forefront of this public conversation stands the nonprofit charity known today as the National Vaccine Information Center (NVIC.org), which represents more than 50,000 parents, healthcare professionals and informed citizens in every state. NVIC was founded by parents of DPT vaccine-injured children, who launched the organized vaccine-safety and informed-consent movement in America in 1982.

The National Vaccine Information Center will continue to defend, without compromise, the ethical principle of informed consent to medical risk-taking and inclusion of legal exemptions to vaccination for health reasons and for religious and conscientious beliefs in all public health policies and laws.

While NVIC continues to serve as a voice for families of children and adults who have suffered vaccine reactions, injuries or deaths, today a great many of our active supporters are healthcare consumers and providers who want to make informed healthcare choices, including vaccination choices, for themselves and their children. Many of those who support our work are not opposed to the concept of vaccination and do not object to every vaccine. However, they are opposed to doctors and government health officials having the power to intimidate, threaten and coerce them into violating their conscience or deeply held religious beliefs in the event they conclude that either vaccination in general or, more commonly, a particular vaccine is not appropriate for themselves or their children.



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Autonomy and Protection of Bodily Integrity: A Human Right

Respect for individual autonomy and bodily integrity, which is embodied in the informed consent ethic, is being eroded in America, and it is compromising the once-sacred trust between doctors, patients and parents. It is not in the best interest of Americans for doctors and public health officials in positions of authority to use the heel of the boot of the state to crush all dissent to mandatory vaccination laws and force individuals to jeopardize their health or violate their conscience and deeply held religious beliefs. It also is not in the best interest of those who deeply believe in the utility of using vaccines to be distrusted and feared by those being forced to vaccinate themselves or their children against their will. How can the people believe or want to do what doctors and public health officials say when they live in fear of them? It is very hard for people to trust government officials who track and hunt parents and children down to ensure compliance with mandatory

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vaccination laws that equate chicken pox with smallpox, and hepatitis B with polio.⁷² It is terrible when nurses live in fear of doctors who fire them for refusing to get a flu shot;⁷³ who deny children medical care if their parents don't give them every government-recommended vaccine on schedule;⁷⁴ who threaten parents for refusing to vaccinate their surviving children with the same vaccine that injured or killed another one of their children; and deny prescription medications or Medicare benefits to adults if they refuse recommended vaccines.

We, as parents, who know and love our children better than anyone else—we, by U.S. law and a larger moral imperative, are the guardians of our children until they are old enough to make life and death decisions for themselves.

We are responsible for their welfare and we are the ones who bear the grief and the burden when they are injured or die from any cause. We are their voice, and by all that is right in this great country and in the moral universe, we should be allowed to make a rational, informed, voluntary decision about which diseases and which vaccines we are willing to risk their lives for, without fearing retribution from physicians employed by the state.

Argue with us. Educate us. Persuade us. But don't track us down and force us to jeopardize our health or violate our conscience or religious beliefs.

-Barbara Loe Fisher, NVIC.org

- www.nvic.org
- www.pathwaystofamilywellness.org/Informed-Choice/opting-out.html

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