

State legislators react to preventable disease outbreaks

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(HealthDay)—Increases in vaccine-preventable disease (VPD) outbreaks

are associated with an increase in proposed state legislation that would restrict vaccine exemptions, according to a research letter recently published in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Neal D. Goldstein, Ph.D., from Drexel University in Philadelphia, and colleagues linked state VPDs reported to the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System to an existing data set of proposed bills that would impact state vaccination exemption laws between 2011 and 2017.

The researchers found that on average, each state reported a mean of 25 VPDs per 100,000 people per year. Of the 175 proposed vaccine [exemption](#)-related bills, 53 percent expanded exemptions and 47 percent restricted exemptions. When examining only bills that would restrict exemptions, each standard deviation increase in VPDs per 100,000 people was associated with 54 percent more bills being proposed, when adjusting for year-to-year differences. When examining only bills that would expand exemptions, reported VPDs were not statistically associated with [bill](#) proposals. When restricting VPDs to only pertussis, there were significant associations with both types of bills.

"Results suggest that state legislators may respond to actionable health concerns and introduce bills to decrease the use of nonmedical [vaccine exemptions](#)," the authors write. "This is promising in light of increasing vaccine hesitancy and misinformation about childhood vaccinations."

More information: [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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