

## Michigan Parents' Medical Freedom & Privacy Rights

by Amanda McMahon

Do you have a choice? Do you have the choice to obtain a second opinion, or the choice to deny a medication you don't feel is necessary, or the choice about what is injected into you or your child's body? The answer is YES. Michigan families have the right to decline any medical intervention, including vaccination, even if they wish to attend a public school.

However, many families are experiencing that they must take many extra steps to obtain a waiver, which now includes an infringement of privacy rights or defending their religious beliefs to state officials for a freedom normally protected under law.

Here are our current options under ML 333.9215, the statute section within the Michigan Public health code.

### Medical Exemptions

Medical exemptions are available for all children who attend school or daycare that receive tax funding. They are obtained from a physician based on current medical conditions or past reactions to vaccines or their components.

### Personal Exemptions

Personal exemptions to vaccinations are available for all children who attend schools or daycare that receive any tax funding. Personal exemptions can be religious or philosophical. The law indicates that parents need only provide a written statement to the school administration indicating vaccines (one, some, or all) are against their beliefs because of religious convictions or other objection to immunization.

### Challenges to Freedom

As of January 1st, 2015, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) enacted Administrative Rule 325.176 (12) requiring parents or guardians who want a religious or philosophical exemption from one or more vaccines for their child(ren) to attend a vaccine education session at their local health department. In exchange, they would receive a state-issued certified waiver to take to the school. The educational session was designed to provide one-sided education on the benefits of vaccinating and the risks of choosing not to vaccinate.

Futhermore, MDDHS requires that schools exclude children from school who do not have the certified waiver on file by November 1st. Waivers that meet statutory obligation but are not "Health Department Certified" are not to be accepted per threat of audit and potential loss of funding. Schools are put in the middle and advised to follow MDDHS policy and procedure rather than honor state law.

During these waiver sessions parents are required to provide personal identifiable information (PII) about themselves and their children on the department waiver form. If the parent refuses to give this PII, the waiver will not be given despite having received the education. Some families have asked that the certified waiver not be copied nor kept in any way by the health department. Most were denied waivers or asked to reschedule.

"I felt my 4th Amendment privacy rights were violated without due cause," said one Livonia mother. "They do not need that information to do their jobs, they are just collecting data!"

Additionally, many parents are finding they are being asked in-depth personal questions regarding their religion and/or other reasons why they are choosing not to vaccinate for one or more vaccines. These meetings are meant to be educational in nature, instead some Michigan parents have been told their beliefs are wrong.

A parent in Wayne County attended with her kids for a religious waiver and was questioned by the health department worker on how she manages to raise her children with two different religions. Both religions promote healthy living and one does not permit abortion; some vaccinations are formulated using aborted fetal cell lines. The other does not support mistreatment of cows, and fetal bovine serum is used in some vaccines as well.

"Having to explain my religious beliefs to an agent of the state felt wrong, especially when less was asked of me when I was married in a church," she said.

Whether someone believes that vaccines are a health benefit or not, as Americans, we have both religious freedom and rights to privacy as guaranteed in the Bill of Rights! If a parent is forced to disclose his or her religion to a state official, is that an infringement on an individual's freedom? Should we have to discuss our religious

beliefs with the government at all? Should we be forced to have to give our own health information and that of the child's to a state agency if the state law says giving it to the local school directly is sufficient?

### Release of Educational Records

In addition, these waivers become part of a child's educational file upon delivery to the school. A student's educational file is covered by Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Up until recently, when called out by Michigan for Vaccine Choice, most school districts were releasing this information to MDHHS without permission, violating federal law. Now many schools ask parents to sign a form giving permission to share PII from the education record of students with the local health department, which is a third party.

"Our teacher required the form be returned and yet there was no 'I do not consent' option on the form. Parents are led to believe they have to sign it. One teacher made it homework with points assigned. There is a lot of misunderstanding." said one Michigan parent.

Lastly, the school is required to enter PII into Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR) which is owned and operated by the MDHHS. What protection is in place to ensure those parents who do not waive their FERPA rights and value their privacy are protected? If this were grades or test scores, would families be okay with this being stored in such a way? How about if it were their disciplinary record?

When we say we have freedom, we must ask if we have true freedom, or just the perception of freedom.

Can we say we have the right to access some of the best medical care in the world, when we do not have the right to decline something the Supreme Court has deemed, "unavoidably unsafe"? And if we decline based on religious or other conviction, do we have to forfeit our right to privacy or free public education which is to be provided for all without discrimination by our state constitution?

Thomas Jefferson's words resonate with many Michigan parents. "If people let the government decide what foods they eat and what medicines they take, their bodies will soon be in as sorry a state as are the souls of those who live under tyranny."

Visit [www.michiganvaccinechoice.org](http://www.michiganvaccinechoice.org) to find out more about preserving individual and parental rights in Michigan.

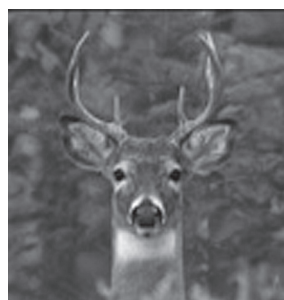
Section 333.9215 PUBLIC HEALTH CODE (EXCERPT) Act 368 of 1978  
<http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-333-9215>  
Michigan Department of Health Administrative Code:  
[http://dmbinternet.state.mi.us/DMB/ORRDocs/AdminCode/1472\\_2014-073CH\\_AdminCode.pdf](http://dmbinternet.state.mi.us/DMB/ORRDocs/AdminCode/1472_2014-073CH_AdminCode.pdf)

## Facebook: Does it Help or Harm?

by Heidi Tice

Since Facebook began in 2004 it has grown to have upwards of 2.1 billion users. This social media frenzy has helped grassroots activities move to the forefront of communication within the masses. This past May, during Fruitport Old Fashioned Days we saw the down side of the Facebook following. Rumors and lies spread just as quickly as social events. To dispel those rumors Fruitport Township Police would like to make a statement about Fruitport Old Fashioned Days. Other than a couple of minor teenage fights, the event was well attended, family friendly, under control and a good time had by all. No one was ever in harm's way much less deadly harm. Fruitport Lions Club would also like to thank the community for a great year and, YES, Fruitport Old Fashioned Days will be back next year.

## Can I get sick from eating deer meat if it is infected with EEE?



If an animal appears ill, you should not consume the meat from that animal, as there are other illnesses that can be transmitted. To kill potential pathogens, wild game should always be thoroughly cooked to an internal temperature of 165 degrees F, measured with a meat thermometer. Email Kristina at [kwieghmink@miottawa.org](mailto:kwieghmink@miottawa.org) for more information from the Department of Natural Resources.

It doesn't seem that there are very many publications that will carry the various opinions and experiences in regard to the problems with vaccinations. That is one of the reasons why we are giving extra space to those people who are concerned about that issue. Their voice should be heard.

## Sports Afield to Norman Rockwell

by Mike Simcik

If you ever wondered how a young boy learns about hunting and fishing the hard way, I'm the guy you want to talk to. When you're young nothing is easy. Certainly not the way it appears to be: full of responsibility, not always easily learnt.

As a child in 1955, I was what you would call quiet and low maintenance, never having a day with nothing to do. I wondered why my Dad wouldn't take me hunting with my uncles and I was getting a little antsy about it. So, came September and I popped the big question. Dad's reply came swift "first learn to walk before you run, son."

The following day, Dad called the local sheriff's department and entered me in a certified shooting school. He told me if I passed we will talk about going hunting. Well, I passed 100%, no problem and that made him happy. Thinking that was all there was to it, I would get my first gun. Nope, that didn't happen. Oh, Dad took me hunting all right, out in the cattails, tall brush and rushes, with a long 2-piece bamboo pole called "noodling." You hold the pole out front and sweep 180 degrees side to side over the tops of the heavy grass. Or, poke the end through a brush pile, making the rabbits and pheasants flush out, so the guys with the shotguns could bag them.

Never worked so hard at anything, but I was Dad's best bird dog.

Next, I could bring a sling shot with marbles and I got my first rabbit in a culvert running under the rail road tracks. Then, I got my first pheasant with a bow & arrow. Nope, still no gun yet.

The following August, Dad made a call again and entered me in the first police hunter safety course. At first nobody knew what to make of it. Labor day weekend brought my first glimpse of the shooting sports: a Mossberg, 16-gauge bolt action shotgun with Polly choke plus a soft case, and a Lee hand loader kit to load my own hunting shot shells.

My first official Father and Son hunt came in October, when bird season opened. It took less than 8 minutes after we bailed out of the car to bag my first pheasant of the year, one shot, one bird. Uncle Marcos retrieved the bird for me. Dad knelt down, put his arm around me and said "hit them in the head, son, because we don't want to pick or spit lead shot on the plate while eating." I don't have enough paper to write about all the pheasants, doves, rabbits and ducks I brought down with that Mossberg.

In 1958, Father took me to a trap club, the Winchester Range in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Fifty-four years later, I'm still shooting Trap and Skeet and doing pretty good, considering my age.

Can't help seeing myself in Norman Rockwell's artwork of a boy growing up, especially in the out of doors. Later, at 14 years old Dad ordered Sports Afield Magazine for me to read. It wisped me away into another world that I'm still enthralled with today.

I always felt that I should have been the poster child for every outdoors expression, from Sports Afield to Norman Rockwell.

Thanks Pop.