

Title: Advocacy for Stronger Governmental Vaccination Mandates
Citation: Executive Council Minutes, June 10-13, 2019, Linthicum Heights, MD, p. 13.
Committee: Mission Beyond The Episcopal Church (report 11)

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church has long maintained that we are guided by faith and reason, and that scientific evidence helps us to better understand God's creation, our place in it, and ways to alleviate suffering and pain.

Resolved, That the Church has long supported fact, evidence, and scientifically based policies, including through Acts of General Convention such as:

- 1991-A007 instructs Episcopalians on how to engage with people with HIV/AIDS in the workplace. The policy states unequivocally that "policies should be based on the scientific and epidemiological evidence."
- 2009-C012 asserts that environmental "policy decisions affecting the health and well-being of humans and ecosystems must be based on scientifically evaluated data and any peer-reviewed data."
- 2003-A011 addresses ethical issues around genetic research and interventions within the opening context that "God has entrusted us to use our medical and other capabilities to work toward healing and restoring creation where it has gone awry."

Resolved, That the proper and responsible use of vaccines is a duty not only to our own selves and families but to our communities. Choosing to not vaccinate, when it is medically safe, threatens the lives of others.

Resolved, That the Executive Council expresses its grave concern and sorrow for the recent rise in easily preventable diseases due to anti-vaccination movements which have harmed thousands of children and adults.

Resolved, That the Executive Council condemns the continued and intentional spreading of fraudulent research that suggested vaccines might cause harm. The spread of this misinformation has resulted in significant harm to children and families.

Resolved, That the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church recognizes no claim of theological or religious exemption from vaccination for our members and reiterates the spirit of General Convention policies that Episcopalians should seek the counsel of experienced medical professionals, scientific research, and epidemiological evidence; and be it further

Resolved, That the Office of Government Relations shall advocate to the United States federal government for stronger vaccination mandates informed by epidemiological evidence and scientific research. We urge all religious leaders to support evidence-based measures that ensure the strongest protections for our communities. Furthermore, our congregations and dioceses are asked to partner with medical professionals to counter false information, and to become educated about programs in their communities that can provide vaccinations and immunizations at reduced or no cost to those in need.