June 3, 2019

The Honorable Kathy Rapp

Chairwoman, House Health Committee

Pennsylvania House of Representatives

213 Ryan Office Building

PO Box 202065

Harrisburg, PA 17120-2065

 Re: House Bill 286, PN 259 – Informed Consent Protection Act - Opposition

Dear Chairwoman Rapp:

I write on behalf of the over 8,500 osteopathic physicians, residents and students in Pennsylvania to share the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association’s (POMAs) opposition to House Bill 286, PN 259.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends childhood vaccinations to prevent child death and lifelong injury from communicable diseases. This includes vaccinations for measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR). Vaccines continue to be one of these most effective public health tools to prevent disease, illness and premature deaths from preventable infectious diseases. The American Osteopathic Association public health policy promotes evidence-based information on vaccination compliance and safety and supports the CDC’s efforts to achieve a high compliance rate among infants, children and adults by encouraging osteopathic physicians to immunize patients of all ages when appropriate.

Osteopathic physicians in Pennsylvania are on the front lines with patients every day discussing the need for vaccinations to prevent infectious disease. Osteopathic physicians must weigh the support of medical science regarding vaccinations with reluctant patients who are hesitant for a variety of attitudes and beliefs. These delicate conversations are the epicenter of the physician-patient relationship. Unfortunately, HB 286 would create government interference, mandates and financial punishments for physicians around these critical conversations. This dialogue is best left to the physician and the patient, and should not be the subject of burdensome regulation.

POMA will continue to encourage osteopathic physicians to support and talk with patients about the critical role vaccines play for the public health safety of all Pennsylvania patients and oppose efforts like HB 286 which will interfere with this communication. Thank you for your consideration of POMA’s position on HB 286. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Andy Sandusky, POMA EVP of Public Policy and Association affairs asandusky@poma.org.

Sincerely,

Pamela S. N. Goldman, DO

CC: The Honorable Dan Frankel