

Anti-Vaccine Voice Growing Louder in NJ

According to a story in one of New Jersey's largest newspapers, anti-vaccine forces are getting louder. While parents who refuse to vaccinate their children are still a tiny minority - just 0.06 percent, or 673 New Jersey kindergartners during the 1997-98 school year - that's twice the 0.03 percent who shunned vaccinations in 1990, according to The Record of Hackensack.

The New Jersey Alliance for Informed Choice in Vaccination is pushing to make it easier for children to attend the state's schools without the vaccinations. The alliance is getting some help from state Sen. C. Louis Bassano, R-Union, who is sponsoring legislation that seeks to overturn a recent decision to add the Hepatitis B vaccine to those required.

"The treatment in this case is worse than the disease," Bassano said during a hearing Thursday where the Senate Legislative Oversight Committee voted to put his resolution before the full Senate.

Some concerned parents feel the same way about the entire regimen of nearly two dozen vaccines young children receive to combat 11 illnesses. Many were once common in this country and can still be deadly.

The parents worry that influx of antibodies could overwhelm a child's developing immune system and may have contributed to the recent rise in autism, childhood diabetes and asthma across the country.

Most of the medical community counters that the vaccines in a way are victims of their own success. Before they became common, thousands of Americans each year died from diphtheria, pertussis, rubella, polio and pneumonia.