

Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Council Member,

I am writing to object the proposal to enforce SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) vaccine passports in Montgomery County.

As an elected council member who represents the citizens of the County, I urge you to reject the council's recommendation to move this legislation forward, as an overwhelming majority of the community in which you serve are vehemently opposed.

Existing and emerging scientific evidence has shown that:

1. The Covid-19 Omicron variant's ability to transmit easily but only give symptoms of a cold (see CDC statements identifying Omicron as a mild variant) to most will help communities achieve herd immunity better than vaccinations.
2. Severe related illnesses like SARS and MERS were short lived epidemics and resolved without vaccination intervention in 2002-2004 and 2012 respectively.
3. Robust, persistent natural immunity in individuals that recovered from the illnesses in point 1 and 2 exists, providing a level of immune-protection superior to that achieved using one of the current existing vaccines. Covid-related findings have been reported in 2021 from a large study in Israel (British Medical Journal, <https://doi.org/10.1101/2021.08.24.21262415>) and in the journal Cell (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.medj.2021.02.001>), showing a very robust B and T-cell mediated immunity in individuals with prior Covid-19 infection.
4. It is evident that, in a County where 95% of the population has received at least one dose of vaccine and 83.5% is fully vaccinated (County data), the goal of a vaccine passport is to mandate County residents to boost with a third dose. Recent data show that vaccines against Covid-19, including booster doses, do not fully protect from infection and do not prevent transmission.
5. Additional doses of m-RNA vaccine have the potential to cause harm in certain populations. Adverse reactions to m-RNA based Covid-19 vaccines exist and their incidence, especially in younger individuals, is significant. Data recently submitted to the prestigious publication British Medical Journal by Kaiser Permanente Northwest Researchers, found that the risk for a young male age 18-24 to develop a myo-pericarditis following a second dose of the mRNA vaccine is about 1 in 1,860 (<https://doi.org/10.1101/2021.12.21.21268209>). Please compare to the overall risk of hospitalization for vaccinated adults, which is about 1 in 26,000 (CDC data, week of 11/27/2021 <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#covidnet-hospitalizations-vaccination>).
6. The evolution of respiratory viruses as they mutate and become new variants is typically shown to produce weaker strains that people with a normal immune system are better able to tolerate and overcome.
7. Medical knowledge and advancements have produced new anti-viral medications specifically designed to treat Covid-19.

Community effects of passing "proof of vaccination" legislation:

1. Requiring patrons to show proof of COVID vaccination will be unequivocally detrimental to the economy of business affected by the legislation in our community. County residents will easily become patrons of business in adjacent counties. Affected businesses will slowly and surely be forced to close.
2. Employees forced to show proof of COVID vaccination against personal beliefs will create additional losses for our local economy as workers choose employment elsewhere.
3. With the SARS-Cov-2 variants that have evolved and are evolving, there is no evidence that vaccination is or will be effective in preventing infection and transmission. A proof of vaccination will create a false sense of security that vaccination prevents transmission, which is contrary to any scientific data. Additionally, this creates an endless cycle of forcing COVID vaccine boosters and showing proof to enter business, which is extremely hypocritical in relation to flu and other vaccinations.
4. Despite a mostly democratic demographic in Montgomery County, an exceptionally large number of individuals are against forced vaccination, regardless of their vaccination status.
5. Passing this legislation would be a significant move from true democratic leadership. Voting county residents will re-evaluate voting choices, and this decision may even affect where people choose to live, creating an exodus of residents and businesses out of the county, like it is widely reported for states like New York.
6. Requiring any vaccination "passport" sets precedence that individuals no longer have the rights to make their own decisions regarding their body and it is an unacceptable government overreach, as also recently affirmed by the United States Supreme Court, into ones' private life.

I appreciate you taking the time to read my concerns. I enjoy being a resident of Montgomery County and entrust you to realize that rejecting the COVID vaccination requirement for entering business will be most beneficial in helping this county recover from the past couple of years.

Sincerely,



Rossana Berti, PhD
Olney, MD 20832

(301) 459-1270