March 17, 2026

The Honorable Patrick McMath, Chair
The Honorable Katrina Jackson-Andrews, Vice Chair
Committee on Health and Welfare
Louisiana Senate
Baton Rouge, LA
sh&w@legis.la.gov

Subject: Senate Bill 36/Consequences for Human and Animal Health/Vote "No"

Dear Chair McMath, Vice Chair Jackson, and Members of the Committee on Health and Welfare:

The Alliance for mRNA Medicines (AMM)[1] writes in strong opposition to SB 36 and respectfully urges a "No" vote on the legislation. As written, SB 36 would prohibit the use of human and animal food/feed as a delivery system for an mRNA vaccine.

While AMM is not aware of an mRNA human or animal vaccine that is presently delivered orally or through food, enactment of this legislation could deprive Louisiana patients, families, farmers, ranchers, pet owners, and others of any such future safe and effective medicines and undermine the state's scientific, economic, and agricultural standing.

The Alliance for mRNA Medicines (AMM) opposes SB 36 because the bill would:

1. **Enact fundamental misunderstandings of biology into law**
2. **Constitute legislating on nonexistent threats**
3. **Undercut confidence in innovative treatments**
4. **Harm Louisiana's agricultural sector**
5. **Weaken national security by potentially restricting access to mRNA-based medical countermeasures**
6. **Undermine the legacy of President Trump's Operation Warp Speed**

1. The "mRNA in Food" Provision Is Based on a Fundamental Misunderstanding of Biology

Every piece of food we eat — every steak, every salad, every glass of milk — contains mRNA. Messenger RNA is a basic molecule of life, present in every living cell. It is extraordinarily

[1] ***About the Alliance for mRNA Medicines:*** The Alliance for mRNA Medicines (AMM)[1] is the leading global organization dedicated to advancing and advocating for mRNA and next-generation encoding RNA therapeutics and vaccines for the benefit of patients, public health, and society. Our mission is to propel the future of mRNA medicine, improve patients' lives, and advance scientific knowledge by convening and empowering mRNA industry leaders, innovators, scientists, and other key stakeholders. AMM's membership, which is composed of over 90 organizations, consists of biotechnology companies, biopharmaceutical companies, contract development and manufacturing organizations (CDMOs), suppliers, raw material providers, and academic researchers.

fragile, rapidly degraded by ubiquitous RNases in the environment and in our own digestive systems, and broken down within minutes to hours even under ideal laboratory conditions. The idea that functional mRNA vaccines could survive cooking, processing, stomach acid, and intestinal enzymes to then somehow "vaccinate" a person through food is not a plausible scientific scenario. It is, bluntly, not how the molecule works.

2. SB 36 Constitutes Legislating on a Nonexistent Threat as No mRNA Vaccine Has Ever Been Delivered Through Food

mRNA vaccines delivered through food are not in development for human and animal uses. Any such product is years away. The lipid nanoparticle delivery systems required for mRNA vaccines to reach their target cells are engineered specifically for injection and are incompatible with oral delivery. Early-stage academic research on plant-based oral vaccine platforms is decades from any clinical application, involves entirely different delivery strategies, and would require full FDA approval — a process that is public, transparent, and years long. Animal vaccines are regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and require extensive review. Legislating against a nonexistent threat lends false credibility to a conspiracy theory and diverts attention from real public health priorities.

3. SB 36 Would Undercut Confidence in Innovative Treatments for Louisianans

SB 36 would undermine Louisiana patients' confidence in a broad and rapidly expanding class of mRNA medicines to treat serious and unmet medical needs.

Messenger RNA, or mRNA, is a natural molecule found in every cell in the human body that carries instructions for making proteins essential to health and disease prevention. mRNA medicines work by delivering instructions that prompt cells to produce specific proteins that create an immune response to fight or prevent illness. After a protein is made, the mRNA naturally breaks down and leaves the body, while the therapeutic effect remains. Researchers have spent more than 60 years preparing the science and infrastructure for mRNA technology which is unlocking new treatment options across a wide range of life-threatening illnesses, including cancer, infectious diseases, rare diseases, and genetic conditions.

Why mRNA Medicines Matter to Patients

mRNA therapies help keep Americans healthier and living longer. Many mRNA therapies offer a highly targeted approach to treatment. Because they are based on natural processes in the body, these treatments may cause fewer side effects than other treatments like chemotherapy. For some patients, an mRNA medicine could be the only treatment option.

mRNA is highly versatile. The same mRNA platform used to develop cancer treatments is utilized for vaccines and rare disease therapies. Limiting access to certain mRNA therapies will not only leave people exposed to infectious diseases, it also will harm the pipeline and manufacturing capacity for future mRNA therapies targeting other diseases.

People should be free to choose the best available treatments for themselves and their families. By encouraging further mRNA research, we provide Americans more options to stay healthy and live longer, more productive lives. The government should not be in the business of picking winners and losers, deciding which patients can receive a potentially life-saving treatment and which patients cannot. Everyone deserves the freedom to consult with their doctor and make the best health decision possible.

Decades of research have shown that mRNA therapies are safe and effective. In 1960, an American scientist discovered that the body naturally produces billions of mRNAs. mRNA medicines use our bodies' natural ability to make proteins to fight disease. For decades, America's researchers have tested mRNA-based therapies in placebo-controlled, double-blind studies to prove they are safe and effective—the same gold standard used for all new medicines.

Cancer vaccines in clinical trials

- **mRNA-4157/V940 (Moderna/Merck):** A personalized mRNA cancer vaccine showing a 44% reduction in melanoma recurrence in Phase 2/3 trials, currently under accelerated FDA review and being administered at leading cancer centers.
- **BNT113 (BioNTech):** An mRNA vaccine targeting HPV-positive head and neck cancer with FDA Fast Track designation. Louisiana has above-average rates of oropharyngeal cancer. This is a cancer treatment, not a COVID product.
- **Pipeline oncology vaccines:** Dozens of mRNA candidates for lung, colorectal, and breast cancers are in clinical trials.

Approved vaccines for serious non-COVID infections

- **mRESVIA (Moderna):** FDA-approved in 2024 for RSV prevention in adults 60 and older—a disease that hospitalizes tens of thousands of elderly Americans each year. This vaccine has no connection to COVID-19.
- **Influenza mRNA vaccines:** Multiple late-stage candidates designed to provide broader protection than existing egg-based flu vaccines.

Rare disease therapeutics for children. mRNA therapies represent the most promising—and in some cases the only—emerging treatment option for children with devastating rare genetic diseases:

- **SYNGAP1 deficiency:** A severe neurodevelopmental disorder causing intellectual disability and refractory epilepsy, for which mRNA replacement therapy is in active development.
- **CTNNB1 syndrome:** Causes profound intellectual disability and motor impairment; mRNA replacement is a lead therapeutic strategy.
- **Inborn errors of metabolism (OTC deficiency, propionic acidemia, methylmalonic acidemia):** mRNA-based enzyme replacement therapies in clinical trials offer potential cures for conditions that currently require lifelong dietary restriction and carry risk of life-threatening metabolic crises.
- **Phenylketonuria (PKU):** mRNA liver-directed therapy in clinical trials offers the prospect of metabolic normalization for affected children.

There are Louisiana families living with these diagnoses today. Because these all rely on the same mRNA platform that this bill is targeting, SB 36 would impede the development of these innovative treatments.

4. SB 36 Would Harm Louisiana Agriculture

SB 36's extension to veterinary medicine is a self-defeating provision for a state with a significant agricultural sector. mRNA vaccine platforms enable faster response to emerging animal health threats—including avian influenza, African swine fever, and foot-and-mouth disease.

mRNA animal health products undergo rigorous regulatory review before use in animals. Like all veterinary medicines, they must demonstrate safety, quality, and effectiveness through science-based evaluation processes and ongoing monitoring. These standards exist to protect animal health, food safety, and the integrity of the food supply. All animal vaccines — including mRNA-based products — are approved and regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Center for Veterinary Biologics (CVB), which rigorously assesses each product's safety, efficacy, and quality prior to use.

5. SB 36 Would Weaken National Security

Stirring doubts on mRNA medicines in Louisiana is not only a public health concern, it is a national security concern. The same mRNA platform that produced COVID-19 vaccines is America's most powerful defense against biological threats, including engineered pathogens. Advances in synthetic biology and artificial intelligence have dramatically lowered the barrier to designing dangerous agents. Adversaries can now develop and deploy engineered biological threats in weeks, while traditional countermeasures take years. mRNA technology is the only medical platform capable of matching that pace: once a pathogen's genetic sequence is identified, an mRNA countermeasure can be designed in hours.

American leadership in mRNA research is therefore not merely an economic asset—it is a strategic one. State-level restrictions on mRNA medicines directly undermine this national security posture by discouraging the private-sector investment and clinical research that sustain America's mRNA innovation base.

Senior officials from President Trump's own first administration have been unequivocal on this point. Dr. Brett Giroir, who served as Assistant Secretary for Health, explained "mRNA platforms enable medical researchers to design targeted interventions in days and manufacture them within weeks. This speed and precision in delivering instructions that train immune systems to recognize and eliminate threats − from COVID to cancer − provides America a critical weapon against pandemics, bioweapons and other deadly diseases that could affect American

families."[2] Dr. Jerome Adams, Trump's Surgeon General and a key participant in Operation Warp Speed, was equally direct, writing in a Washington Post op-ed that "abandoning mRNA for antiquated technology is a national security disaster". [3] SB 36 would compound that damage within Louisiana's borders.

6. SB 36 Would Undermine President Trump's Operation Warp Speed Legacy

Operation Warp Speed stands as one of President Trump's defining achievements—a public-private partnership that saved hundreds of thousands of American lives and established U.S. leadership in mRNA research and manufacturing. The research and industrial capacity built through Operation Warp Speed is now fueling the next generation of cancer vaccines, rare disease treatments, and pandemic preparedness tools. Enacting a ban on the very technology that Operation Warp Speed accelerated would undermine that legacy and squander the investment the American people made in it.

Conclusion

AMM thanks the members of the Committee for considering our comments on this legislation. We recognize that this hearing is part of a broader national conversation about vaccine policy and the government's pandemic response. There is no question that mistakes were made—including overpromising the benefits of vaccination, downplaying risks, and imposing coercive mandates. We share those concerns and believe they must inform future policy.

At the same time, the answer to past policy failures is not to prohibit a proven and transformative medical technology. Continued support for mRNA research will help more Louisiana patients fight serious diseases, attract high-quality jobs and federal investment to the state, and preserve America's global leadership in medical innovation. The bill's purported benefits are unsupported by science. At the same time, the bill creates significant potential harm to patients, researchers, farmers, and the state's economy.

For all the reasons set forth above, AMM urges the Committee to oppose Senate Bill 36. We appreciate your consideration and welcome any questions. Please contact us at Clay.Alspach@mrnamedicines.org.

Sincerely,

Clay Alspach
Executive Director
Alliance for mRNA Medicines

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[2]Giroir, B. "America needs warp speed on vaccines, not RFK Jr's warped decision making" USA Today. September 1, 2025. Accessed at: https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2025/09/01/trump-kennedy-hhs-mrna-vaccine-covid/85833361007/

[3]Adams, J., "mRNA vaccines, Operation Warp Speed were historic feats," Washington Post, August 15, 2025. Accessed at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2025/08/15/covid-bhattacharya-mrna-vaccines-nih/.