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Hegar says he will withhold support for Hawkins' Nomination
State Senator says HHSC Commissioner must first explain how he intends to
carry out Executive Order mandating HPV vaccine

AUSTIN, TEXAS—Today, Texas State Senator Glenn Hegar (R, Katy) announced that he will withhold his support for Texas Health and Human Services Executive Commissioner Albert Hawkins in the Senate Nominations Committee next week until Hawkins can first explain how he intends to implement Governor Rick Perry's executive order mandating that 11 and 12 year old girls be given multiple doses of the Gardasil HPV vaccine before they can attend Texas public schools. Hegar said that he specifically wants to know how Hawkins intends to determine whether or not a girl receiving the vaccine may be pregnant since Merck, the manufacturer of the vaccine, says that the Gardasil HPV vaccine is not recommended for use in pregnant women or girls.

Hawkins, who was reappointed on Wednesday by Governor Perry to another term as Executive Commissioner of the state's Health and Services Commission, must be confirmed by the Senate Nominations Committee of which Hegar is a member. Hawkins is scheduled to appear before the Nominations committee next Wednesday.

"While Commissioner Hawkins is not responsible for issuing the order to mandate the use of Gardasil in every 11 and 12 year old girl in the State of Texas, he is indeed the person who is responsible for developing and ultimately approving the plan to carry out the Governor's order" Hegar said.

"I want to know exactly how Mr. Hawkins intends to carry out Governor Perry's mandate in light of the fact that the manufacturer of this vaccine says that it cannot be given safely to someone who is pregnant," said Senator Hegar. "Does that mean the commissioner intends to require a pregnancy test for each of these young children before they receive the Gardasil HPV vaccine or does he intend to put these children at undue risk instead?" Hegar added.

Hegar said tragically, sexually active young girls can become pregnant as soon as they have their first menstruation which often happens at age 11 or 12.

"If Governor Perry believes we should vaccinate these young girls against a disease that occurs as a result of sexual activity then he should also assume that there exists the possibility that some of those same girls might also be pregnant when they receive this mandated vaccine," Hegar said.

"I, along with tens of thousands of Texas parents of young daughters, want to know exactly how Commissioner Hawkins intends to address this very serious contradiction, as well as many other lingering questions that I have about the implementation of this mandated vaccine, including the long term health and safety risks imposed on our daughters, and the false sense of security against a deadly cancer that this mandated vaccine places on the people of Texas."

On Monday morning of this week, Senator Hegar filed SB 438 to preempt Governor Perry's executive order so that the HPV vaccine would not be a requirement for young girls entering the public education system.