



## **2019 – 2020 Research Package**

**Topic 3: THBT important decisions about children's health should be made by medical professionals and not by their parents**



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### **Model and Definition**

Proposition team should create fair and balanced definitions for the debate.

Criteria may clarify to the judges a team’s position and can be a valuable tool. Proposition teams should consider what types of medical decisions are “important,” and how medical might go about making these types of decisions (ex. How and when will parents be informed of a decision, will there be any process to appeal these decisions, etc.).

### **Potential Proposition Points**

#### **1. Medical decisions made by medical professionals are more informed, making them just**

Parents are often not medical professionals by training so they lack the knowledge that may be necessary to make decisions. Worse, parents may be misinformed and can inadvertently perpetuate inappropriate medical views. Medical professionals are the most likely to have the knowledge required to accurately judge the pros and cons of treatment options, making them the best actor to make complex decisions that require a working knowledge of the scientific context.

#### **2. This motion improves personal health outcomes**

Status quo decisions made by parents may have a greater risk of negative health outcomes for the child, despite the parents’ best intentions. On the other hand, medical professionals should be making decisions in the best interests of the patients, which can lead to better health outcomes (which in some instances can be life-saving) for the child.

#### **3. This motion improves public health outcomes**

Parents often make decisions based on desired best outcomes for their own child. However, the lack of preferential treatment physicians will show to one child over another means that they are more likely to support medical decisions that have good public health outcomes for both individual children AND their peers (ex. vaccination)



## **Opposition:**

### **1. Parents understand their children's needs better**

As the parent of a child, they understand the child's thoughts, feelings, and experiences more than a doctor who sees the child for a checkup twice a year. A parent can accurately speak on behalf of a child based on their knowledge of his/her behaviours and thoughts and is the best spokesperson for them.

### **2. Doctors don't know everything**

Doctors are knowledgeable about the medical field, but they also make mistakes. There have been multiple instances where doctors may have prescribed the wrong medicine to patients. A doctor cannot make a decision for a patient, but can only provide advice.

### **3. Parents bear the consequences of the medical decisions**

As caregivers of the child, parents will be the ones dealing with the consequences of the decisions. It is ethically justifiable for the parents to make the decision for their child, as it will not only impact the child but also their family as a whole.

