
THE 317 COALITION

June 6, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health & Human Services, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health & Human Services, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health & Human Services, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
B300 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James T. Walsh
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health & Human Services, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear _____:

As organizations committed to increasing the federal discretionary funding for the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (formerly the National Immunization Program) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), commonly known as “section 317” of the Public Health Service Act, we are writing to urge you to provide \$802 million in the fiscal year 2008 Labor, HHS Appropriations Bill for this critical program.

This program provides vaccines for children from working families who do not qualify for the federal entitlement program, Vaccines for Children (VFC), as well as for adolescents and adults. The 317 funds are used to purchase and administer vaccines, usually at local health departments, and for immunization delivery services, surveillance, communication, and education.

In 1983, vaccines for seven life-threatening diseases were available and recommended for routine use in children with costs of approximately \$45 to fully immunize a child. By January 2007, vaccines to protect against 16 diseases were available and recommended for children and adolescents. With these new recommendations, the estimate is now \$1,181 to fully immunize a female and \$894 to fully immunize a male through age 18 years. In addition, approximately 46,700 U.S. adults die annually of vaccine-preventable diseases. Influenza deaths account for approximately 36,000 of these and pneumonia and hepatitis B rank second and third in cause of adult deaths. The 317 Program funding has not kept pace with the cost to implement the newly recommended vaccines for children and adolescents, and has never adequately funded vaccines for adults.

Vaccines have been hailed as one of the most cost-effective public health measures, saving 35,000 lives and preventing 14 million cases of disease among each birth cohort. Vaccines have

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saved the lives of millions of people worldwide, yet they continue to be undervalued and under-funded year after year.

With the advent of new technologies, an unprecedented number of new vaccines are being introduced and recommended to fight diseases once thought to be out of reach of prevention efforts. In 2005 and 2006, CDC dramatically expanded immunization recommendations for children, adolescents and adults. Some of the new vaccines and expanded recommendations include:

- Expansion of routine recommendation of influenza vaccination to include all children 6 to 59 months of age.
- Routine recommendation of vaccination of girls 11 to 12 years of age against HPV, the cause of most cervical cancer. Vaccination of all girls and women is recommended through 26 years of age.
- Use of vaccine to protect against rotavirus, a viral infection that can cause severe diarrhea, vomiting, fever and dehydration and death in infants and young children.
- Use of meningococcal vaccine for adolescents and college freshmen to protect against meningococcal disease, a highly contagious illness which usually presents with a sudden high fever, rash, chills, and lethargy. Meningitis is often mistaken for influenza, yet when left untreated can result in brain damage, loss of limb and death.
- Replacement of the Td booster with the more comprehensive tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap) vaccine to reduce the number of cases of pertussis (whooping cough) in infants, adolescents and adults. Pertussis is a highly contagious, vaccine-preventable bacterial illness characterized by prolonged and severe coughing and sometimes pneumonia. In severe cases, pertussis may lead to brain damage or death.
- Universal use of hepatitis A vaccine for children and lowering age indication for vaccination to 12 months of age. Hepatitis A is a serious liver disease.
- A single dose of zoster vaccine to protect adults 60 years of age and older from the risk of herpes zoster (shingles) which is an outbreak of rash or blisters on the skin that is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox and can include prolonged debilitating pain.

The CDC recently submitted a report to Congress indicating that the 317 budget would have to be increased by over \$200 million or 80% just to keep pace with the cost of purchasing newly recommended vaccines since 1999. The report does not overtly estimate state infrastructure needs, but implies that a significant increase of well over \$100 million or 60% is also needed just to expand grants to support adolescent and adult infrastructure.

The 317 Program is essential to ensure the timely immunization of children, adolescents and adults. It ensures that children who are not eligible for the Vaccines for Children program and who cannot otherwise afford immunization can be vaccinated, and provides some access to vaccinations for uninsured and underinsured adolescents and adults. It is also our public health system's primary source of funding for building a solid immunization infrastructure, which is needed for today's vaccines and will be relied upon in the event of an influenza pandemic or other bioterrorist event.

Please join us in ensuring that all individuals have access to life-saving vaccines.

Sincerely,

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Ambulatory Pediatric Association

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Academy of Physician Assistants

American Association of Occupational Health Nurses
American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Immunization Registry Association
American Liver Foundation
American Medical Association
American Pharmacists Association
American Public Health Association
Association of Minority Health Professions Schools, Inc.
Association of Prevention, Teaching and Research
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology
American Social Health Association
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
Emory Vaccine Center
Every Child By Two
GlaxoSmithKline
Hep C Advocate Network, Inc. (HepCAN)
Hepatitis B Foundation
Hepatitis Foundation International
Immunization Action Coalition
Meningitis Angels
Merk
National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Local Boards of Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Foundation for Infectious Diseases
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable
PKIDS/Parents of Kids with Infectious Diseases
Sabin Vaccine Institute
Sanofi Pasteur
Trust for America's Health
The Vaccine Education Center at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Wyeth

STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Arizona Hepatitis C Coalition (Phoenix, AZ)
Arizona Mountain Park Health Center (AZ)
Arizona Partnership for Immunization (AZ)
Arkansas Diabetes Program (AK)
Boone County Health Department (Lebanon, IN)
Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency (Hillsdale, MI)
California Coalition for Childhood Immunization C31 (CA)
Chicago Area Immunization Campaign (Chicago, IL)
Central Michigan District Health Department (Reed City, MI)
City of Laredo Health Department (TX)
Colorado Academy of Family Physicians (CO)
Colorado Children's Immunization Coalition (Denver, CO)
Connecticut Department of Public Health Immunization Program (CT)

Consortium for Healthy and Immunized Communities, Inc. (Northern Ohio)
Danbury Visiting Nurse Association (Danbury, CT)
Daviess County Health Department (Washington, IN)
Dearborn County Health Department (IN)
Elkhart County Health Department (IN)
Essex Metro Immunization Coalition (NJ)
Every Child By Two of St. Joseph County (South Bend, IN)
Florida Association for Infant Mental Health (FL)
Fort Wayne – Allen County Department of Health (Fort Wayne, IN)
Franklin County Board of Health (Columbus, OH)
Gallia County Health Department (Gallipolis, OH)
Grant County Health Department (Marion, IN)
Greater New Orleans Immunization Network (Harahan, LA)
Georgia AIDS Coalition (GA)
Georgia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (GA)
GetAFluShot.com (Washington and Oregon) (Portland, OR)
Hamilton County Health Department (Noblesville, IN)
Hawaii Immunization Coalition (Honolulu, HI)
H.E.A.L.S. of the South (Hepatitis Education Awareness and Liver Support) (Tallahassee, FL)
Health Department (Gallipolis, OH)
Healthy Children/Healthy Teen (Kokomo, IN)
Health Partners (Minneapolis, MN)
Howard County Health Department (Kokomo, IN)
IHA of Ann Arbor (MI)
Immunization Action Coalition of Washington (WA)
Immunization Coalition of Los Angeles (Los Angeles, CA)
Immunization Partnership of Alameda County (CA)
Immunization Task Force – Metro Omaha (NE)
Indiana Immunization Coalition (IN)
Intermountain Healthcare (Salt Lake City, UT)
Iowa Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (Iowa City, IA)
Iowa Immunization Coalition (IA)
Joseph M. Smith Community Health Center (Allston, MA)
Kenosha Immunization Coalition (WI)
Laredo Health Coalition (TX)
Langlade County Immunization Coalition (WI)
Larimer County Immunization Coalition, (Fort Collins, CO)
Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department (Lawrence, KS)
Lawrence County Health Department (IN)
Liberty County Health Awareness Coalition (TX)
Louisiana Shots for Tots Coalition, Inc. (Harahan, LA)
Mississippi Statewide Immunization Coalition (Jackson, MS)
Mountain Park Health Centers (AZ)
North Carolina Immunization Branch, Division of Public Health (Raleigh, NC)
New Britain Health Department (CT)
Northern Nevada Immunization Coalition (NE)
Norumbega Pediatrics (Bangor, ME)
Ohio Association of Community Health Centers (Columbus, OH)
Oregon Adult Immunization Coalition (Portland, OR)
Oregon Partnership to Immunize Children (OR)
Palmer Community Health (West Union, IA)

Parkview Hospital (Fort Wayne, IN)
Philadelphia Immunization Coalition (PIC) (Philadelphia, PA)
Planned Parenthood of Arkansas and Eastern Oklahoma, Inc. (Tulsa, OK)
Public Health – Dayton & Montgomery County (formerly Combined Health District of Montgomery County) (Dayton, OH)
Public Health Division, Dept. of Health and Human Services, City of Portland, ME (Portland, ME)
Physicians Health Plan of Northern Indiana (IN)
Rhode Island Department of Health (Providence, RI)
San Francisco Immunization Coalition (CA)
St. Mary's Hospital (Cottonwood, ID)
St. Mary's Pediatric Clinic (Evansville, IN)
St. Joseph County Health Department (South Bend, IN)
Sunshine Community Health Center (Talkeetna, AK)
Super Shot, Inc. (Fort Wayne, IN)
Tennessee Department of Health, State Immunization Program (TN)
Tippecanoe County Health Department (IN)
Tri-County Immunization Coalition (Charleston, SC)
Tulare County Child Care Educational & Head Start Program (CA)
Tulsa Area Immunization Coalition (OK)
Twin Cities Wellness Coalition (SD)
Unified Government (Kansas City, KS)
University of Wisconsin Immunization Task Force (WI)
Vaccinate Alaska Coalition (AK)
Vanderburgh County Department of Health (Evansville, IN)
Wabash County Health Department (IN)
Warren County Public Health (NY)
Washington Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (WA)
Washington County Immunization Coalition (Port Washington, WI)
West Virginia Immunization Network (WV)
Wisconsin Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (Madison, WI)
Wright County public Health (Buffalo, MN)