

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 16, 2010

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Cochran:

As you prepare the fiscal year (FY) 2011 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill, we urge you to provide \$675 million for the national immunization program authorized under Section 317 of the Public Health Service Act at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The Section 317 program provides essential funding to state and local health departments for vaccinating children, adolescents, and adults. It ensures that children who are not eligible for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program and who cannot otherwise afford immunization can be vaccinated. In states with unspent funding, adults have been eligible to receive recommended immunizations, as well.

In 2009, the CDC submitted a report to Congress which illustrated that the Section 317 program requires additional funding to carry out its essential public health mission of protecting Americans from preventable diseases. At the same time that the report was released, states began receiving additional Section 317 program funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The new initiatives that states have been able to begin through this funding demonstrate the effectiveness of a well-funded Section 317 program. For the first time, entire families in some states received the Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis vaccine. In other states, children were able to receive their annual influenza vaccine in their school, which helped keep children in the classroom, not sick at home.

Investing in immunizations is also effective in reducing long-term direct health care spending and indirect costs to the economy. For every dollar invested to provide the seven recommended pediatric vaccines, society saves \$16.50 in direct and indirect costs. As a result, every year, billions of dollars are saved through this program alone.

Providing \$675 million for the Section 317 program in FY 2011 would ensure Americans have access to cost-effective prevention measures to keep Americans healthier and make our economy stronger. We greatly appreciate your leadership and your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Whitmore

Carl Levin

Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Dick Durbin

Frank R. Lautenberg

Chuck Schumer

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Robert Menendez

Tom Kaine

Chris Dodd

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Debbie Stabenow

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