

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 4, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health & Human Services, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
184 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  
123 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Senator Specter:

As your Subcommittee prepares to mark up the Fiscal Year 2008 Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations Bill, we respectfully request your support to include \$802 million for the national immunization program authorized under section 317 of the Public Health Service Act at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccines are one of the most cost-effective tools for preventing disease. For every dollar spent on vaccines, society saves up to \$27 in medical and societal costs.

The widespread use of vaccines is one of the most remarkable accomplishments in modern public health. The debilitating and deadly disease smallpox has been eradicated. Polio is on its way to being eliminated thanks to effective vaccines and public health efforts. Vaccines exist to prevent diseases such as meningitis, shingles, measles, chicken pox, tetanus, whooping cough, and many others. We now have a vaccine to protect against the human papillomavirus, which is known to cause cervical cancer.

The section 317 immunization 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. It also provides limited access to immunizations for uninsured and underinsured 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.


Unfortunately, the section 317 program is not receiving sufficient funding to carry out its essential public health mission. We need our nation's population to be well-vaccinated so that they are less vulnerable to the risks of preventable diseases. That is why we are asking for the 317 program to receive the funding it needs to ensure access to cost-effective prevention measures once they become available and are endorsed by the public health and medical communities.

Thank you for your past leadership and support of efforts to extend access to life-saving vaccines for children, adolescents, and vulnerable adults.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed



Gordon H. Smith

Chris Dodd

J. Webb

Erin Boyle

Bob Sanders

Robert Menendez

Joe Lieber

Chris Feingold

Ed Kennedy

Dick Durbin

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Hillary Rodham Clinton

Lou Lomax

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John Sununu

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