

June 25, 2007

Jon Abramson MD, ACIP Chairman
Larry K. Pickering, MD, ACIP Executive Secretary
ACIP Members and Liaisons
1600 Clifton Road, NE
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Members of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), Liaisons, and concerned others:

We, the undersigned organizations representing public health, private providers, advocacy and educational groups, and persons affected by disease, urge you to move forward in 2007 with recommendations for universal childhood vaccination against influenza to include all children and teens through age 18 years. Too many Americans remain vulnerable to the serious effects of influenza disease because current vaccine recommendations do not go far enough.

We strongly support an immediate recommendation for routine influenza vaccination of school-aged children through 18 years of age. Targeted vaccination strategies in children are falling well short of goals. In the 2004-05 influenza season, more than half of children aged 6 months to 23 months did not receive vaccine.¹ Among children aged 5 to 17 years who were household contacts of high-risk persons, only 10.8% were vaccinated.²

Vaccinating children against influenza reduces the spread of influenza in households and communities, and helps protect those at high risk of influenza complications from acquiring the disease. Vaccination of school children in Japan provided protection and reduced mortality from influenza in older persons.³ Recent school-based vaccination efforts in the United States have lowered influenza-like symptoms and outcomes in households where children were vaccinated.⁴

Vaccine production capacity has increased greatly over the last several years, with three manufacturers producing vaccine for use in children and at least two additional childhood products pending approval and licensure by the Food and Drug Administration. It is critical that this production be sustained and increased through continued expansion of the childhood recommendations.

A universal recommendation for routine annual influenza vaccination for all persons through age 18 years would simplify the current targeted recommendations, sustain and build manufacturing capacity, and provide benefits to individuals by reducing morbidity and mortality, providing herd immunity protection, and enhancing vaccine access.

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Preliminary findings from discussions with public health and healthcare opinion leaders conducted by Emory University found support for universal influenza vaccination in school-aged children.⁵ Public and private sector infrastructure supported the expansion of routine influenza vaccination to children aged 6 to 59 months as supply of the vaccine increased and will continue to expand to support a recommendation for school-aged children.

All of us acknowledge that, for several years following the publication of a universal childhood influenza vaccination recommendation, it is unlikely that we will achieve high vaccination levels of children and teens for a number of reasons, including insufficient supplies and difficulties in accessing all school-age children in a clinic setting during influenza vaccination season. The ACIP recommendations should certainly reflect that fact. However, we believe it is essential to move forward with the goal of universal vaccination for children now, so that vaccination rates have an opportunity to rise and protect our nation's population over the next several years. The sooner we begin, the sooner we will have a better-protected population.

You have an opportunity to protect children against a serious disease, while at the same time protect their communities and households from the spread of disease and support the continued growth of our nation's vaccine manufacturing capacity. We urge you to bring a universal influenza vaccination recommendation for school-age children through 18 years of age before the full ACIP for a vote at the next ACIP meeting.

All the undersigned organizations support universal vaccination for all school-age children and teens through age 18 years.

We request that you make copies of this letter available for all the members of the public who attend the next ACIP meeting.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

American Academy of Physician Assistants

American College Health Association

American College of Nurse-Midwives

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians

American College of Preventive Medicine

American Hospital Association

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American Immunization Registry Association

American Lung Association

American Medical Association

American Nurses Association

American Osteopathic Association

American Pharmacists Association

American Society of Health-System Pharmacists

Association for Prevention Teaching and Research

The Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC)

Association of Immunization Managers

Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists

Every Child By Two

Families Fighting Flu, Inc.

Flu Busters

GetAFluShot.com

Healthy Solutions, Inc.

Hepatitis B Foundation

Immunization Action Coalition

Maxim Health Systems

Meningitis Angels

National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors

National Association of Community Health Centers, Inc.

National Association of County & City Health Officials

National Association of Local Boards of Health

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP)

National Association of School Nurses

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National Foundation for Infectious Diseases
National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Medical Association
National Meningitis Association
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable
Nurse Practitioner Healthcare Foundation
PKIDS (Parents of Kids with Infectious Diseases)
Prevention MD
Society for Adolescent Medicine
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine
Vaccine Education Center
The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Visiting Nurse Associations of America (VNAA)

State or Local Organizations

Adair County Public Health, Iowa
Adult Immunization Coalition of Central Ohio
Adult Immunization Coalition of Tompkins County, New York
Alaska Diabetes Prevention and Control Program
American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago, Illinois
Arizona Association of Community Health Centers
The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department, Texas
Bay Clinic, Inc., Hilo, Hawaii
Berks Visiting Nurse Association, Pennsylvania
Bucks County Immunization Coalition, Pennsylvania
Burnett County Department of Health, Human Services, and Aging, Wisconsin

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Calhoun County Department of Health, Iowa
Catholic Charities, Chicago, Illinois
The Center for Biosecurity of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Baltimore, Maryland
Central Michigan District Health Department
ChesPenn Health Services, Pennsylvania
Chester County Immunization Coalition, Pennsylvania
Chicago Area Immunization Campaign, Illinois
Clallam County Department of Health & Human Services, Washington
Colorado Influenza and Pneumococcal Alert Coalition
Colorado Wellness Connection, LLC, Littleton, CO
Columbia County Department of Health, New York
Columbus Public Health, Ohio
Connecticut Influenza and Pneumococcal Coalition
The Consortium for Healthy & Immunized Communities, Inc., Ohio
Cuyahoga County Board of Health, Ohio
Dallas Family Medicine, LLC, Dallas, Oregon
Danbury Visiting Nurse Association, Connecticut
Dane County Immunization Coalition, Inc., Wisconsin
Detroit Medical Center, Michigan
District Health Department # 2, Michigan
DuPage County Health Department, Illinois
East Texas Community Health Services, Inc., Nacogdoches, Texas
Eastern Shore Rural Health System, Nassawadox, Virginia
Essex Metro Immunization Coalition, New Jersey
Evanston Health Department, Illinois
Every Child By 2 of St. Joseph County, Indiana
The Family Medical Group, Cincinnati, Ohio

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Farrell Pediatrics, Vienna, Virginia
Franklin County Board of Health, Ohio
Gallia County Health Department, Ohio
Garland Health Department, Texas
Grand Forks Public Health Department, North Dakota
Greater Grand Forks Immunization Coalition, North Dakota
Greater Lehigh Valley Visiting Nurse Association, Pennsylvania
Greater Salt Lake Immunization Coalition, Utah
Hackley Health, Muskegon, Michigan
Hackley Visiting Nurse Services & Hospice, Inc., Muskegon, Michigan
Hawaii Immunization Coalition
Health Partners, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Hillsborough County Health Department, Florida
Home Health Care Management, Pennsylvania
Howard County Health Department, Indiana
Indiana Immunization Coalition
Immunization Coalition of Delaware
Immunization Coalition of Washington, DC
Immunization Task Force - Metro Omaha, Nebraska
International Travel Medicine, Tulsa, Oklahoma
Iowa Immunization Coalition
Jeffersonville Pediatrics, Jeffersonville, Indiana
Jewish Child Care Association, Pleasantville, NY
Johnson County Public Health, Iowa
Kaiser Permanente Northern California, Walnut Creek, California
Kalihi-Palama Health Center, Honolulu, Hawaii
Kearney Clinic, Kearney, Nebraska
Kenosha Immunization Coalition, Wisconsin

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Kenosha Visiting Nurse Association, Inc., Wisconsin
Kentucky School Nurse Association
Labette County Health Department, Kansas
Langlade County Immunization Coalition, Wisconsin
Larimer County Immunization Coalition, Colorado
LifeCare Alliance, Columbus, Ohio
John C. Lincoln Community Health Services, Phoenix, AZ
Louisiana Health Care Review
Maniilaq Public Health Nursing, Alaska
Maryland Partnership for Prevention, Inc.
Michigan Primary Care Association, Lansing, Michigan
Mile Hi Immunizations - Denver, Colorado
Minnesota Coalition for Adult Immunization
Montgomery County Health Department, Pennsylvania
Montgomery County Immunization Coalition, Pennsylvania
Mountain Park Health Centers, Phoenix, Arizona
MPRO, Michigan's Quality Improvement Organization
Neighborhood Pediatrics, P.C., West Hempstead, New York
New Mexico Immunization Coalition
North Willow Grove Pediatrics, Willow Grove, Pennsylvania
Northeast Wisconsin Immunization Coalition
Northern Nevada Immunization Coalition
Norwell Visiting Nurse Association, Inc., Massachusetts
Nursing & Home Care and Affiliates, Wilton, Connecticut
Ohio Association of Community Health Centers, Columbus, Ohio
Okaloosa County Health Department, Florida
Oregon Partnership to Immunize Children (OPIC)

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Palm Beach County Immunization Coalition, Florida

Pennsylvania Immunization Coalition

Philadelphia Health Management Corporation (PHMC)/Healthcare for the Homeless, Pennsylvania

Philadelphia Immunization Coalition (PIC), Pennsylvania

PMDA, Pennsylvania's Association for Long-Term Care Medicine, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Project LOVE, Columbus, Ohio

Putnam County Health Department, Florida

Queen City Physicians, Cincinnati, Ohio

Ridgefield Visiting Nurse Association, Connecticut

Rutland Area Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice, Vermont

St. Croix-Pierce Immunization Coalition, Wisconsin

St Joseph County Health Department, Indiana

San Diego Immunization Initiative (I-3), California

Sarasota County Health Department, Florida

Seminole County Health Department, Florida

SHOTS, etc., Nashville, Tennessee

Somerset School District, Wisconsin

Southern Nevada Immunization Coalition

Summit County Health Department, Utah

Texas Medical Association, Austin, Texas

Tompkins County Health Department, New York

Trinity Visiting Nurse & Homecare Association, Moline, Illinois

Tulsa Area Immunization Coalition, Oklahoma

United American Indian Involvement, Los Angeles, California

University of Wisconsin Immunization Task Force, Madison, Wisconsin

Vaccinate Alaska Coalition (VAC)

Visiting Nurse Association Health Services, Port Huron, Michigan

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Visiting Nurse Association of Pottstown & Vicinity, Pennsylvania

Visiting Nurse Association-St. Louis, Missouri

Visiting Nurse Association of Western Michigan

Visiting Nurses Association of Greater New Orleans, Inc., Louisiana

Visiting Nurse Service, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana

Visiting Nurse Services of Michigan

Visiting Nurse Services of Newport and Bristol Counties, Rhode Island

Vista Community Clinic, Vista, California

Warren County Health Services, New York

Washington County Immunization Coalition-West Bend, Wisconsin

Washington Pediatrics, Washington, North Carolina

Wharton County Immunization Coalition, Texas

Whitman County Health Department, Washington

Wilkin County Public Health, Minnesota

Will County Health Department, Illinois

Wright County Public Health, Minnesota

Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Immunization Coalition, Alaska

^{1,2} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Estimates of influenza vaccination target population sizes in 2006 and recent vaccine uptake levels. Access at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>, December 6, 2006.

³ Reichert TA, Sugaya N, Fedson DS, Glezen WP, et al. The Japanese experience with vaccinating schoolchildren against influenza. *Vaccine*. 2005;23:1284-1293.

⁴ King JC, Stoddard JJ, Gaglani MJ, Moore KA, et al. Effectiveness of school-based influenza vaccination. *N Engl J Med*. 2006;355:2523-32.

⁵ Orenstein WA, Protzel-Berman P. Universal Influenza Vaccination in the United States: Are We Ready? Association of Immunization Managers/CDC Program Managers Meeting presentation, December 8, 2006.