

February 16, 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.<sup>1</sup> Among children aged 5 to 17 years who were household contacts of high-risk persons, only 10.8% were vaccinated.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup> Recent school-based vaccination efforts in the United States have lowered influenza-like symptoms and outcomes in households where children were vaccinated.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup> 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 February 21, 2007, 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 ACIP meeting in February.

Sincerely,

### **National Organizations**

**American Academy of Physician Assistants**

**American College Health Association**

**American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists**

**American College of Preventive Medicine**

**American Hospital Association**

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**American Immunization Registry Association**

**American Lung 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**

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**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 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 Regional Organizations**

**Adult Immunization Coalition of Tompkins County, New York**

**Alaska Diabetes Prevention and Control Program**

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**American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago**

**Arizona Association of Community Health Centers**

**The Arizona Partnership for Immunization**

**Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department, Texas**

**Berks Visiting Nurse Association, Pennsylvania**

**Bucks County Immunization Coalition, Pennsylvania**

**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**

**Colorado Influenza and Pneumococcal Alert Coalition**

**Colorado Wellness Connection, LLC**

**Columbus Public Health, Ohio**

**The Consortium for Healthy & Immunized Communities, Inc., Ohio**

**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**

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**Essex Metro Immunization Coalition, New Jersey**

**Evanston Health Department, Illinois**

**Greater Lehigh Valley Visiting Nurse Association, Pennsylvania**

**Hackley Visiting Nurse Services & Hospice, Inc., Michigan**

**Hawaii Immunization Coalition**

**Hillsborough County Health Department, Florida**

**Home Health Care Management, Pennsylvania**

**Immunization Coalition of Delaware**

**Immunization Coalition of Washington, DC**

**Iowa Immunization Coalition**

**Kenosha Immunization Coalition, Wisconsin**

**Kenosha Visiting Nurse Association, Inc., Wisconsin**

**Langlade County Immunization Coalition, Wisconsin**

**Larimer County Immunization Coalition, Colorado**

**LifeCare Alliance, Ohio**

**Louisiana Health Care Review**

**Maniilaq Public Health Nursing, Alaska**

**Maryland Partnership for Prevention, Inc.**

**Mile Hi Immunizations - Denver, Colorado**

**Minnesota Coalition for Adult Immunization**

**Montgomery County Health Department, Pennsylvania**

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**Mountain Park Health Centers, Arizona**

**MPRO, Michigan's Quality Improvement Organization**

**New Mexico Immunization Coalition**

**Northeast Wisconsin Immunization Coalition**

**Northern Nevada Immunization Coalition**

**Norwell Visiting Nurse Association, Inc., Massachusetts**

**Okaloosa County Health Department, Florida**

**Oregon Partnership to Immunize Children (OPIC)**

**Pennsylvania Immunization Coalition**

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

**Ridgefield Visiting Nurse Association, Connecticut**

**Rutland Area Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice, Vermont**

**St. Croix-Pierce Immunization Coalition, Wisconsin**

**San Diego Immunization Initiative (I-3), California**

**Sarasota County Health Department, Florida**

**Seminole County Health Department, Florida**

**Somerset School District, Wisconsin**

**Southern Nevada Immunization Coalition**

**Texas Medical Association**

**Tompkins County Health Department, New York**

**Trinity Visiting Nurse & Homecare Association, Illinois**

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**Tulsa Area Immunization Coalition, Oklahoma**

**Vaccinate Alaska Coalition (VAC)**

**Visiting Nurse Association Health Services, Michigan**

**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**

**Warren County Health Services, New York**

**Washington County Immunization Coalition-West Bend, Wisconsin**

**Wharton County Immunization Coalition, Texas**

**Will County Health Department, Illinois**

**Wright County Public Health, Minnesota**

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<sup>1,2</sup> 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.

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

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

<sup>5</sup> 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.