

October 4, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi:

As organizations that care about healthy aging, we write to ask Congress to provide all adults access to all CDC-recommended vaccines without cost-sharing as part of the upcoming Build Back Better package.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this, causing adults to delay or avoid interactions with the health care system for preventative services.¹ Last year, Congress made sure that COVID-19 vaccines would be available to everyone with no patient cost-sharing. Under the ACA, this is also true for other vaccines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for enrollees in non-grandfathered employer and individual market plans, and for adults in the Medicaid expansion eligibility group in states that have expanded Medicaid. Congress acted years ago to ensure that all children should have access to vaccines regardless of insurance status. Similarly, Congress should provide all adults access to all CDC-recommended vaccines without cost-sharing.

There is legislation, the Protecting Seniors Through Immunization Act (S. 912/H.R. 1978), which is especially important in the wake of coronavirus public health crisis. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 50,000 adults died from vaccine-preventable diseases each year. Millions more suffer the health effects of those diseases, causing them to miss work to care for themselves or others and leaving them unable to engage in their routine activities. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this, causing adults to delay or avoid interactions with the health care system for preventative services. A component of combatting COVID-19 is a wider adoption of preventive health strategies to reduce the burden of co-morbid conditions that put people at higher risk of worse outcomes of COVID-19. Immunizing against all vaccine-preventable diseases will both contribute to better health outcomes overall and preserve vital capacity at hospitals by reducing preventable admissions. Despite the well-known benefits of immunization, adult coverage lagged behind federal targets for most commonly recommended vaccines.

The Protecting Seniors Through Immunization Act will help strengthen vaccine uptake by improving education and equitable access to recommended vaccines for Medicare beneficiaries, especially in communities where vaccination rates have been historically low. It will bring much needed parity to the out-of-pocket payment required of Medicare beneficiaries for vaccines covered under Part B and Part D. Copayments apply only to vaccines covered under Medicare Part D (tetanus-diphtheria-acellular pertussis (Tdap) and varicella zoster (shingles)) and vary widely across plans. Immunizations should be available with no cost to the beneficiary in the same way vaccines are covered under Part B (Covid-19, flu, pneumococcal). Removing this barrier will provide a direct financial and health benefit for people

¹ <https://avalere.com/insights/updated-analysis-finds-sustained-drop-in-routine-vaccines-through-2020>

aged 65 and over and will help to improve our national preparedness among the Medicare population. The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the extraordinary power of vaccines to limit the spread of disease, reduce the risk of severe illness, hospitalization and death from SARS-COV-2, and ensure social and economic resilience. Furthermore, we witnessed incredibly high uptake of COVID-19 vaccines with over 93% of the eligible US 65+ population receiving a first dose in less than a year. This is an unprecedented achievement for an adult vaccine, and one that should be replicated to limit the significant health and economic impacts that could be avoided by timely vaccination.²

Thank you for your consideration of support.

Sincerely,

Adult Vaccine Access Coalition
Alliance for Aging Research
Alpha-1 Foundation
AMDA - The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine
American Association on Health and Disability
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses (AAOHN)
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)
American College of Preventive Medicine (ACPM)
American Immunization Registry Association (AIRA)
American Kidney Fund
American Lung Association
American Pharmacists Association (APhA)
American Public Health Association (APHA)
Arthritis Foundation
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)
Association of Immunization Managers (AIM)
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC)
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF)
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)
AstraZeneca
Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO)
California Immunization Coalition
Caregiver Action Network
Caring Ambassadors Program
Coalition of Wisconsin Aging and Health Groups
Community Catalyst
Dynavax
Families Fighting Flu
Generations United
Geriatric Medicine PAs
Global Healthy Living Foundation
GSK
HealthHIV
HealthyWomen

² https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations_vacc-total-admin-rate-total

Hep B United
Hepatitis B Foundation
Idaho Immunization Coalition
Immunization Action Coalition (IAC)
Immunize Colorado
Immunize Nevada
Immunize Ohio
ImmunizeTN
Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA)
Justice in Aging
Kelsey-Seybold Clinic
Kimberly Coffey Foundation
Lakeshore Foundation
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
Lupus Foundation of America
Medicago
Medicare Rights Center
Merck
Moderna
National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA)
National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)
National Association of State Long Term Care Ombudsman Programs (NASOP)
National Black Nurses Association (NBNA)
National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA)
National Consumers League
National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians (NCAPIP)
National Council on Aging
National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID)
National Grange
National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA)
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR)
Novavax
Patient Access Network (PAN) Foundation
Pfizer
RetireSafe
SAFE Action Fund
Sanofi
Scientific Technologies Corporation (STC)
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
The AIDS Institute
The Gerontological Society of America (GSA)
Triage Cancer
Trust for America's Health
Tulsa Area Immunization Coalition
USAging
Vaccinate Your Family
Valneva

Voices for Vaccines

WithinReach

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease