



August 6, 2021

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
United States Senate
524 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Marsha Blackburn
United States Senate
B40B Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Duckworth and Blackburn:

As members of the Adult Vaccine Access Coalition (AVAC), we commend you for your leadership in introducing a resolution recognizing the importance of vaccination and immunization in the effort to control the COVID-19 pandemic and to provide routine protection against vaccine-preventable diseases and outbreaks in the United States.

AVAC includes more than sixty organizational leaders in health and public health who are committed to overcoming the barriers to adult immunization and to raising awareness of and engaging in advocacy on the importance of adult immunization. Our mission is informed by a growing body of scientific and empirical evidence that shows that immunization improves health, protects lives against a variety of debilitating and potentially deadly conditions, and saves costs to the healthcare system and to society. A top priority for AVAC is to achieve increased adult immunization rates through education and awareness of recommended vaccines and addressing challenges to access.

We share your view that immunizations are a highly cost-effective form of preventive medicine that help save lives by protecting the health and wellbeing of individuals and families in communities nationwide. Over the last decade, advancements in technology, policy, and infrastructure have strengthened the immunization landscape. Since their inception, vaccines have eradicated smallpox and polio in the US and have dramatically reduced the spread of many more crippling and potentially life-threatening diseases such as diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, and rubella. Vaccines also prevent the spread of common infectious and potentially fatal diseases such as chickenpox, influenza, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, meningococcal disease, pneumococcal disease, and whooping cough (pertussis) and certain HPV-related cancers like cervical and oropharyngeal and other head and neck cancers. Vaccines not only help protect the immunized person but also those around them who may not be able to be immunized because they are too young to be vaccinated themselves or suffer from a health condition that prevents them from being immunized.

Despite the demonstrated benefits of vaccination, prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, more than 50,000 adults die from vaccine-preventable diseases. Millions more adults become seriously ill, causing them to miss work and leaving some unable to care for those who depend on them. The COVID-19 pandemic put a tremendous strain on our chronically underfunded public health infrastructure and exposed important weaknesses that simply must be addressed.

Now more than ever, we must recognize the vital role of immunizations in helping to prevent—and mitigate—disease outbreaks and we must apply the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, and work to integrate best practices as we work together to ensure the tools and capabilities

necessary to swiftly and confidently respond to future disease outbreaks, pandemics, or disasters are in place.

We thank you for your commitment to immunization and are pleased to offer our support for your resolution. We stand ready to work with you toward common solutions that will strengthen and enhance access to and utilization of vaccines across the health care system, particularly among the adult population.

Sincerely,

AIRA

Alliance for Aging Research

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Heart Association

American Lung Association

American Pharmacists Association

American Public Health Association

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)

Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs

Families Fighting Flu

GSK

Hep B United

Hepatitis B Foundation

Immunization Action Coalition

Infectious Diseases Society of America

Kimberly Coffey Foundation

March of Dimes

Merck & Co Inc.

National Association of County and City Health Officials

National Black Nurses Association

National Consumers League

National Foundation for Infectious Diseases

Sanofi

STChealth

The Gerontological Society of America

Trust for America's Health

Vaccinate Your Family