



September 23, 2020

Senator Tina Smith
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Smith,

As the Congress and our nation continue to respond to the public health emergency that is overtaking our country, members of the Adult Vaccine Access Coalition (AVAC) thank you for introducing the Community Immunity During COVID-19 Act.

This legislation would provide robust funding to develop, scale, and evaluate local initiatives to promote recommended vaccinations during this pandemic. These investments will be particularly important for building confidence around an eventual COVID-19 vaccine once one has been proven to be safe and effective.

Immunizations are essential to protecting individuals across the life course from vaccine-preventable diseases and outbreaks. At risk populations, including older adults, persons with disabilities, and those living with chronic health conditions such as heart and lung disease, diabetes and cancer, are extremely vulnerable and at increased risk of suffering from the serious adverse health consequences of vaccine preventable illnesses. Your important legislation will provide a heightened focus on addressing vaccination hesitancy concerns and increase public confidence in the safety and efficacy of vaccines as a potentially lifesaving medical countermeasure.

It is critical to continue communication and engagement with the public on the need to continue the stay up to date with the immunization schedules recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), including the receipt of vaccinations for flu, pneumococcal disease, shingles, and hepatitis. At the same time, we must start educating on what to expect when a COVID-19 vaccine becomes available. Now is the time to educate and

encourage our most vulnerable populations to seek access to vaccines, which provide clear and direct health and financial benefits to individuals and our society. Doing so will address the long-standing disparities around adult vaccines.

Again, thank you for your steadfast leadership around immunizations during this difficult time. Members of AVAC stand ready to work with you on important and effective solutions.

Sincerely,

American Immunization Registry Association

American Lung Association

American Pharmacists Association

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology

Biotechnology Innovation Organization

Families Fighting Flu

March of Dimes

Medicago

National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)

National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable

Seqirus

The AIDS Institute

The Gerontological Society of America

Trust for America's Health

Vaccinate Your Family

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease