



October 8, 2019

The Honorable Ami Bera
US House of Representatives
1727 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
US House of Representatives
2306 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gus Bilirakis
US House of Representatives
2227 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Phil Roe
US House of Representatives
102 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Burgess
US House of Representatives
2161 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Schiff
US House of Representatives
2269 House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kim Schrier
US House of Representatives
1123 House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Katko
US House of Representatives
2457 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives:

As members of the Adult Vaccine Access Coalition (AVAC), we commend you for your leadership in introducing House Resolution 592, recognizing the anniversary of the eradication of smallpox and the importance of vaccination in the United States and worldwide.

AVAC includes more than fifty-five 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 effective form of preventive medicine that help save lives by protecting the health and wellbeing of individuals and families in communities nationwide. 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). 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, every year, 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. Gaps in vaccine coverage leave our nation vulnerable to the resurgence of devastating disease outbreaks such as measles, and also susceptible to emerging threats such as Ebola or Zika – for which the development of new vaccines is underway. Now more than ever, we must recognize the vital role of immunizations in helping to prevent—and mitigate—disease outbreaks.

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,

Alliance for Aging Research
American Academy of Family Physicians
American College of Physicians
American Pharmacists Association
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association of Immunization Managers
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Families Fighting Flu
GSK
Hep B United
Hepatitis B Foundation
Immunization Action Coalition
Infectious Diseases Society of America
March of Dimes
National Association of Chain Drug Stores
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Black Nurses Association
National Consumers League
National Foundation for Infectious Diseases
Novavax
Sanofi
Scientific Technologies Corporation
The Gerontological Society of America
Takeda Pharmaceuticals
Trust for America's Health