

April 1, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

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

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leaders Schumer and McCarthy:

We, the undersigned organizations that care about healthy aging, write to offer our strong support for the Protecting Seniors Through Immunization Act (H.R. 5076/S. 1872), and urge Congress to include this important legislation in an upcoming pandemic response package. This bipartisan legislation, which was introduced by Representatives Shalala, Bouchon, Kuster and Roe, would address a long-standing structural inequity that hinders immunization opportunities for Medicare beneficiaries, a cost-effective means of reducing disease burden and saving lives.

The Protecting Seniors Through Immunization Act will address the out-of-pocket payment required of Medicare beneficiaries, many of whom are on fixed incomes. Copayments apply to vaccines covered under Medicare Part D (tetanus-diphtheria-acellular pertussis (Tdap) and varicella zoster (shingles)) but not vaccines under Part B (flu, pneumococcal), which are available with no cost to the beneficiary. The bill will also improve education and access to recommended vaccines for Medicare beneficiaries, with the goal of helping to increase vaccination rates.

This legislation is especially important in the wake of coronavirus public health crisis. As part of our public health preparedness we need to fix Medicare Part D. Older adults are at particular risk for serious illness and those 50 and older, particularly with multiple comorbidities, are at higher risk of dying if infected. Fixing structural inequities in vaccine coverage now through passage of the Protecting Seniors Through Immunization Act will provide a clear and direct financial and health benefit for people age 65 and over and will help to improve our national preparedness among the Medicare population.

Thank you for your leadership in swiftly addressing the serious health and economic challenges facing our nation during this uncertain time. We stand ready to work with you toward to improve vaccine access to a future COVID-19 vaccine as well as all recommended vaccines for the Medicare population.

Sincerely,

Advanced Practice Nursing
African American Health Alliance
Alliance for Aging Research
Alliance for Immunizations in Michigan (AIM)
American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA)
American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association
American Behcet's Disease Association
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Immunization Registry Association
American Kidney Fund
American Lung Association
American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP)
American Society on Aging
AOHP
Arthur Caplan, PhD, NYU Langone Health
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
Association of Immunization Managers
Black Women's Health Imperative
Blank Children's Hospital
California Immunization Coalition
Caregiver Action Network
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
COPD Foundation
Dane County Immunization Coalition
Dba Avalon Health Care Center
Families Fighting Flu
Forward Pharmacy
Forward Pharmacy of Columbus
Freddi Segal, GIDAN, Member of AAPA, GSA, and AGS
Geriatric Medicine Physician Assistants
Harris Teeter Pharmacy

Harvard University
HealthHIV
Healthy Solutions, Inc.
HealthyWomen
Hep B United
Hepatitis B Foundation
Idaho Immunization Coalition
Immune Deficiency Foundation
Immunization Action Coalition
Immunize Colorado
Immunize Nevada
ImmunizeOhio
ImmunizeTN
Indiana Immunization Coalition
Infectious Disease Epidemiologist
Infectious Diseases Society of America
Institute for Public Health Innovation
Justice in Aging
Keck School of Medicine
Kelsey-Seybold Clinic
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, inc.
Men's Health Network
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Hispanic Nurses
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)
National Black Nurses Association
National Caucus and Center on Black Aging
National Consumers League
National Council on Aging
National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID)
National Grange
National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA)
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Organization for Rare Disorders
National Urban League
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable
North Carolina Immunization Coalition
Patient Access Network (PAN) Foundation
Pennsylvania Immunization Coalition
Retiresafe

Sioux Falls Area Immunization Coalition
STHealth LLC
The Arizona Partnership for Immunization
The Gerontological Society of America
The Immunization Partnership
Trust for America's Health
Tulsa Area Immunization Coalition
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
University of Iowa College of Public Health
University of Pennsylvania
University of Wisconsin School of Medicine & Public Health
UPH-Meriter Mckee Clinic Pediatrics
Utah Adult Immunization Coalition
Vaccinate Your Family
Vaccine Ambassadors
Virginia Barrette
Walmart
WV Immunization Network, a program of The Center for Rural Health Development, Inc.
WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease

cc:

Chairman Grassley, Senate Finance Committee
Ranking Member Wyden, Senate Finance Committee
Chairman Pallone, House Energy & Commerce Committee
Ranking Member Walden, House Energy & Commerce Committee
Chairman Neal, House Ways & Means Committee
Ranking Member Brady, House Ways & Means Committee