

02-10

## STATEMENT OF POLICY

### Vaccine Supply and Distribution

#### Policy

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) urges the federal government to develop an integrated set of policies that will assure an uninterrupted supply of vaccines needed for sustaining and improving the immunization rates of the population of this nation. NACCHO also urges recognition of and support for the unique role local health departments play in this endeavor.

NACCHO urges that the federal government:

- Embark on a bold, far-reaching examination of how the nation can ensure a reliable supply of essential vaccines through federal purchase and distribution.
- Engage in a candid, public discussion about needed public-private collaboration and how that can protect against inequities in coverage due to unequal access to vaccines and vaccine administrators.
- Encourage transparency and timeliness in communications between the federal government and state and local health officials, including complete disclosure of what is known and not known about vaccine supply.
- Promote flexibility in implementation so that local health departments can make decisions that best meet the needs of their varied communities.
- Exchange information on new vaccines between the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices to enhance vaccine recommendations.

NACCHO urges the federal government to develop a comprehensive set of federal policies to:

- Minimize the likelihood of vaccine shortages from recurring and to prevent any future shortages through a standard evaluation of vaccine manufacturing interruptions.
- Increase the supply and demand for vaccines.
- Prevent and correct geographic maldistribution of vaccines.
- Assure availability of vaccines to individuals at high risk when vaccine shortages cause limitations on usage.

In addition, NACCHO urges on-going federal government support for local health departments to contribute to an assured and sustained vaccine supply by supporting their capacity to:

- Monitor vaccine availability at the local level.
- Assure that access to vaccines are equitable among all segments of the population
- Intervene when necessary to correct mal-distribution, particularly during shortages and supply disruptions.



## **Justification**

The use of vaccines has transformed the health of individuals and communities in the United States by converting serious infectious diseases, often with epidemic potential, into diseases of much reduced incidence and impact.<sup>1,2</sup> Vaccines coupled with immunization programs have contributed immensely to public health practices and are a cost-effective public health tool. Shortages of childhood and adult vaccines have recurred consistently over the past few decades<sup>3,4,5,6</sup> In 2016, a shortage of Pentacel (DTaP-IPV-Hib combination vaccine) occurred<sup>7</sup>, and in early 2017, one of two manufacturers was unable to supply this vaccine<sup>8</sup>. Multiple factors can and have converged to cause shortages in vaccines available to local communities. These include production problems, reduction in the number of vaccine manufacturers; increased number of vaccines; increased costs to purchase vaccines; and unexpected overwhelming demand for certain vaccines.<sup>5,9,10,11,12,13</sup> A recent study demonstrated that the price per dose of a vaccine can have an impact on availability of vaccines.<sup>6</sup> Timely and uninterrupted access to vaccines is a critical component in the fight to prevent the resurgence of debilitating diseases such as mumps, measles, rubella, pertussis, polio, tetanus, HPV and diphtheria, as well as the annual threat of influenza<sup>14</sup>.

## **References**

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## **Record of Action**

*Proposed by NACCHO Immunization Workgroup*

*Adopted by NACCHO Board of Directors November 10, 2002*

*Updated July 2004*

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*Updated October 2010*

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