

May 29, 2019

The Honorable Marsha Blackburn
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blackburn and Senator Duckworth:

On behalf of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), representing the nearly 3,000 local health departments across the country, I write to thank you for highlighting the importance of immunizations to keeping our communities healthy by introducing the bipartisan “Vaccines Save Lives” Resolution (S.Res. 165). The resolution, which passed the Senate by unanimous consent on April 11, sends a clear message of the importance of and Congressional support for vaccines, while calling on all Americans to follow the recommended vaccine schedule.

As you are aware, many communities across the country are facing unprecedented outbreaks of preventable diseases such as measles. Vaccines are the best defense against these costly and dangerous ailments.

Vaccines are one of the most successful public health measures available to populations worldwide, with an unparalleled record of disease reduction and prevention. Vaccines are a cost-effective tool for protecting children and adults against serious and potentially fatal diseases. Vaccines have been proven to be safe and highly effective at reducing disease rates when public health recommendations are followed. This is not just an issue about children. Vaccines across the lifespan are critical, particularly in our efforts to protect those who are at-risk or most vulnerable to contracting a vaccine-preventable disease.

Local health departments are key participants in our nation’s immunization infrastructure and are on the front lines responding to emerging health threats, including vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks. While 90% of departments participate in direct immunization efforts, these departments are also leaders beyond service delivery. For example, local health departments also promote the importance of immunizations through education and policy. They monitor, prevent, and control disease to reduce the health risks and financial burden of infectious disease cases and outbreaks. And they collect and analyze immunization coverage rates in their communities to assess and ensure protection against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Thank you again for raising the issue of vaccine-preventable disease amid the ongoing measles outbreaks. I look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to address this problem. Please contact Adriane Casalotti, MPH, MSW, NACCHO Chief of Government and Public Affairs at acasalotti@naccho.org if you require additional information or have any questions.

Sincerely,



Lori Tremmel Freeman, MBA
Chief Executive Officer

