

September 18, 2008

IMMUNIZATION ALLIANCE CALL TO ACTION

The Immunization Alliance, which comprises the groups listed below, sets forth the following Call to Action for public health organizations, government, health care professionals, the media and the public.

What the Alliance commits to:

- We commit to continued partnerships with policy makers to ensure that:
 - children receive recommended immunizations on time (according to the schedule of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, the American Academy of Family Physicians and the American Academy of Pediatrics) to protect them against vaccine-preventable diseases and to protect the public's health;
 - vaccines are as safe as possible and vaccine safety research is adequately funded;
 - the vaccine supply is sufficient and equitably distributed;
 - parents and caregivers have the knowledge and information they need to make fully-informed decisions in the best interests of their child.

What the Alliance asks:

- We ask the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to undertake a public information campaign reinforcing the value and importance of immunization to empower parents to make informed decisions about vaccinating their children.
- We ask physicians and other health care professionals to work closely with parents and patients to foster an understanding of the need for, and timing of, recommended vaccines, and to assess what is needed to earn or regain the trust of some parents. The goal is to work as a team to fully protect infants and children against diseases that can result in death or life-long disability.
- We ask medical professional organizations and public health agencies to provide support and guidance to physicians in counseling parents about the importance and safety of vaccines. The goal is to facilitate informed decision-making by parents and caregivers.
- We encourage parents to ask questions at the doctor's office, and to expect answers based on the best scientific information available. We ask them to rely on credible sources for their information about vaccine safety and effectiveness, and

to take the time to understand the evidence on which immunization recommendations are based in order to make fully informed decisions about their children's health.

- We ask the federal government to dedicate funding for continued research into vaccine safety and effectiveness.
- We ask the media to take the time to understand vaccine science and the evidence on which immunization recommendations are based. We also ask the media to keep the public interest foremost in their treatment of this subject, and to consider the potential consequences of lending credence to various publicity efforts and spokespersons without a complete and critical review of the scientific merit of these sources.
- We ask that, given the importance of communicating scientifically based and trustworthy information, all editors of Internet content, publications and blogs should ensure that appropriate efforts are made to comply with the high standards associated with responsible journalism.

List of Participating Organizations

American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physician Assistants
American College of Preventive Medicine
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians
American Medical Association
American Public Health Association
America's Health Insurance Plans
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
California Immunization Coalition
Every Child By Two
Immunization Action Coalition
Infectious Diseases Society of America
March of Dimes
National Foundation for Infectious Diseases
Parents of Kids with Infectious Diseases
Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society
Sabin Vaccine Institute
United Health Group
Vaccine Education Center at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Voices for Vaccines