

May 1, 2008

Dear Representative:

As organizations and corporations committed to improving the health of all children, we are writing to express our support for and urge you to cosponsor HR 4990, the Vaccines for Children Access Act of 2008, introduced by Representatives Waxman and Roybal-Allard. This important legislation will enable the 1.8 million underinsured children to receive Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program vaccine at public health clinics.

Since enactment of the VFC Program, childhood vaccine coverage rates have increased dramatically. However, gaps in coverage remain, specifically with underinsured children.

VFC defines “underinsured” as children who have private health insurance but the coverage does not include vaccines, children whose insurance covers only selected vaccines (making them VFC eligible for non-covered vaccines only); or children whose insurance caps vaccine coverage at a certain amount – once that coverage amount is reached, these children are categorized as underinsured.

Currently, underinsured children receive VFC vaccine at federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), rural health clinics (RHCs), and a limited number of health departments that have arrangements with federally qualified health centers and rural health clinics in their states.

A child’s eligibility to receive VFC vaccine should not be based on where they are getting vaccinated, but rather on their insurance status. FQHCs and RHCs are not in every community, forcing some children to travel long distances to receive their VFC vaccines or to not get them at all.

If we are to achieve the objective of vaccinating as many children as possible, then we must ensure that all public health clinics that serve these children are able to provide them with VFC vaccine. We welcome the opportunity to work with you on passage of the Vaccines for Children Access Act of 2008.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

American Public Health Association
Association of Immunization Managers
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Every Child by Two
GlaxoSmithKline
Infectious Diseases Society of America
Immunization Action Coalition
MedImmune
Meningitis Angels
Merck
Novartis

National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Community Health Centers
Partnership for Prevention
PKIDs – Parents of Kids with Infectious Diseases
sanofi pasteur
Voices for Vaccines
Wyeth