



November 10, 2020

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
United States Senate
503 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Darren Soto
United States House of Representatives
1507 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Brown and Representative Soto,

We write to express our strong support for the Helping Adults Protect Immunity (HAPI) Act. We appreciate your bi-cameral leadership to strengthen access to immunizations under Medicaid.

Medicaid, along with the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) is a federal-state insurance partnership that provides coverage to over 70 million low income children and adults. Medicaid covers low-income older adults, persons with disabilities and chronic conditions, and pregnant women. Many of these same populations have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. These high-risk health groups are also extremely vulnerable to serious adverse health consequences of other vaccine preventable illnesses. Hospitalizations, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of independence, the ability to engage in activities of daily living and reduced quality of life are but a few of the devastating, but avoidable, direct and indirect costs. Vaccine preventable conditions add over \$8.3 billion to the health care system overall, according to a 2016 study of just four vaccine preventable conditions (influenza, pneumococcal disease, herpes zoster and pertussis)¹.

The HAPI Act seeks to provide a baseline of consistent and reliable Medicaid coverage across the country. Currently, access to vaccines under Medicaid varies, depending on where live and your Medicaid eligibility status. Medicaid enrollees who are covered through Medicaid expansion programs are guaranteed access to all vaccines recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) with no cost sharing requirements. By contrast, not all vaccines recommended for adults are covered by traditional Medicaid programs and those that are covered may have cost sharing requirements that put access to the vaccine out of reach. The HAPI Act seeks to ensure that all Medicaid enrollees have access to this important preventive health service and do not face insurmountable financial hurdles when a recommended vaccine provides a clear and direct health benefit.

Again, thank you for leadership on the HAPI Act. Members of AVAC stand ready to work with you on this, and other important policy solutions to strengthen and expand coverage for recommended vaccines to those who most need it.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Aging Research

American Immunization Registry Association

American Lung Association

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology

Emily Stillman Foundation

Families Fighting Flu

Hep B United

Hepatitis B Foundation

Infectious Diseases Society of America

Kimberly Coffey Foundation

Medicago

National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)

National Black Nurses Association

National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable

STChealth

The AIDS Institute

The Gerontological Society of America

Trust for America's Health

Vaccinate Your Family

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease