



September 27, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leaders McConnell and McCarthy:

As leaders in public health advocacy from states across the nation, our organizations are banding together to urge expedited passage of legislation aimed at improving the health of older Americans, eliminating confusion and disparities in coverage for FDA-approved and CDC recommended vaccines and improving vaccination rates for our nation's seniors - a group that the pandemic has shown is most vulnerable to serious communicable diseases.

The "Protecting Seniors through Immunization Act" (S 912/HR 1978) would eliminate Medicare Part D vaccine co-pays for patients, which will level the vaccine access playing field and bring parity to cost-sharing coverage for all vaccines recommended for Medicare beneficiaries.

Currently, some vaccines have different cost sharing requirements for participants. Immunizations that fall under Medicare Part B coverage --pneumococcal disease vaccines, flu shots, and COVID-19 vaccines -- have no co-pay requirement.

However, vaccines for diseases such as Shingles, Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis, along with all future vaccines for our nation's older adults will fall under coverage of Medicare Part D and require co-pays from beneficiaries.

This discrepancy causes confusion and results in many older adults walking away from getting one of these important vaccines. With adoption of the "Protecting Seniors through Immunization Act" these cost barriers will be eliminated and the goal of increasing vaccination

rates among American adults, particularly in underserved, vulnerable communities, will be one step closer to reality.

Due to the pandemic, vaccination rates across all age groups have dropped off significantly, due to interruptions in routine doctor visits and hesitancy to enter medical facilities during a public health emergency. By ensuring that all older adults face no financial barrier to being able to receive all FDA-approved and CDC-scheduled immunizations, we can hope to keep this population from unnecessarily contracting other preventable diseases and help to increase immunity against serious disease.

Vaccines have never been more at the forefront of our minds than during the pandemic. These remaining barriers continue to discourage older adults from being fully protected from vaccine-preventable diseases. The “Protecting Seniors through Immunization Act” is a common-sense way to address this issue. We urge your support for this policy and call for swift action to advance this public health priority.

Sincerely,

ImmunizeDC and the undersigned 60 organizations from across the United States:

Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio
Alzheimer’s San Diego
American College of Physicians-Connecticut Chapter
Arizona Medical Association
Arizona Osteopathic Medical Association
Arizona Pharmacy Association
Caring Ambassadors, Inc.
Center for Medicare Advocacy
Colorado Council of Black Nurses
Colorado Gerontological Society
Connecticut Academy of Family Physicians
Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents
Connecticut Citizens for Science
Connecticut ENT Society
Connecticut Pharmacists Association
Connecticut Society of Eye Physicians
Connecticut Urology Society
Connecticut Dermatology & Dermatologic Surgery Society
Delaware Academy of Medicine / Delaware Public Health Association
Fairfield County Medical Association
Florida Academy of Family Physicians
Florida Osteopathic Medical Association
Georgia Academy of Family Physicians
Georgia State Medical Association

Hartford County Medical Association
Idaho Immunization Coalition
Immunize Colorado
Immunization Coalition of Delaware, a program of the Delaware Academy of Medicine/
Delaware Public Health Association
Immunize Kansas Coalition
Immunize Ohio
Institute for Public Health Innovation
Kentucky Academy of Family Physicians
Kimberly Coffee Foundation
Louisiana Vaccine Alliance
March of Dimes
Marietta Vazquez, MD, FAAP, Associate Medical Student Division, Yale School of Medicine
Maryland Academy of Family Physicians
Massachusetts Councils on Aging
Massachusetts Independent Pharmacists Association
Medical Society of Northern Virginia
Michigan Academy of Family Physicians
Michigan Association of Osteopathic Family Physicians
Michigan Council of Nurse Practitioners
Michigan Osteopathic Association
Michigan State Medical Society
Michigan State Medical Society Alliance
National Association of Hispanic Nurses DC Metro Chapter
Nebraska Pharmacists Association
New Mexico Pharmacists Association
Nurses Who Vaccinate
Oklahoma Chapter of the American College of Physicians
Oklahoma Society of Clinical Oncology, Inc.
Rhode Island State Nurses Association
Texas Academy of Family Physicians
The Connecticut Infectious Diseases Society
The Immunization Task Force - Metro Omaha
The Puerto Rico College of Physicians and Surgeons
Vaccination Alliance of Connecticut
Virginia Society of Rheumatology
West Virginia Academy of Family Physicians