



November 18, 2020

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Brown:

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which represents 136,700 family physicians and medical students across the country, I write to share our support for the [S.4864](#) the *Helping Adults Protect Immunity (HAPI) Act*. We appreciate your enduring commitment for expanding health care access through the Medicaid program.

The AAFP supports the *HAPI Act* because it addresses an important challenge of reducing illness, hospitalizations, and deaths associated with infectious diseases. Immunizations are often touted as a 21st century public health success, yet 42,000 adults die each [year](#) from vaccine-preventable diseases. The U.S. has also failed to meet its Healthy People 2020 goals for vaccinating adults. A 2016 [report](#) published in *Health Affairs* indicates that the economic costs of vaccine-avoidance for adults was \$7.1 billion in 2015. By ensuring consistent vaccine access within the Medicaid program, the *HAPI Act* addresses an important strategy of reducing financial burdens that currently exist. Approving this policy will be vital once a coronavirus (COVID-19) immunization is approved.

The *HAPI Act* is important because it would help reduce the need to get vaccinated in settings outside of their medical homes. Although immunizations are available in many different locations, such as pharmacies and in workplaces, the National Vaccine Advisory Committee [recommends](#) immunizations are provided as part of coordinated health care and within a medical home setting. Primary care doctors understand their patients' medical histories and risk factors and are effective at educating individuals when new immunizations are recommended. This proposal will be particularly vital for addressing the unique needs of adults with chronic conditions. These individuals, and other vulnerable patients, are typically at-risk under normal conditions and, especially so during the COVID-19 health emergency.

Again, we are pleased to support the *HAPI Act*, and welcome the opportunity to help advance this proposal. For more information, please contact Erica Cischke, Senior Manager for Legislative and Regulatory Affairs at ecischke@aafp.org.

Sincerely,

Gary L. LeRoy, MD, FAAFP
Board Chair

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