



March 17, 2021

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

Dear Senator Brown,

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 you 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 need it most.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Aging Research
American Academy of Family Physicians
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology
American Immunization Registry Association
American Lung Association
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology
Emily Stillman Foundation
Families Fighting Flu
GSK
Hepatitis B Foundation
Hep B United
Immunization Action Coalition
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