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**JOINT STATEMENT SUPPORTING THE VACCINES ACT**

**American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American College of Physicians, American Osteopathic Association, and American Psychiatric Association**

**May 22, 2019**

Our organizations, which represent a combined membership of more than 560,000 physician and medical student members, are united in our support of the bipartisan Vaccine Awareness Campaign to Champion Immunization Nationally and Enhance Safety (VACCINES) Act, introduced yesterday by physicians Rep. Kim Schrier (D-Wash.) and Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas), along with Reps. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.), Brett Guthrie (R-Ky.), Kurt Schrader (D-Ore.), and Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.).

The science is resoundingly clear: Vaccines are safe, effective, and save lives. Yet, measles outbreaks continue to spread across the country, with 880 cases in 24 states, the greatest number of cases reported in the U.S. since 1994 and since the measles was declared eliminated in 2000.

Parents want to do what is best for their children. Yet, parents searching for credible information about vaccines are bombarded with misinformation online, where it's difficult to distinguish fact from fiction. A better understanding of vaccine hesitancy and how to effectively reach our patients is vital to protecting our communities from vaccine-preventable diseases like measles.

The VACCINES Act does just that, by recommending federal funding for vaccine hesitancy surveillance at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and by outlining a national public messaging campaign informed by this research to help improve vaccination rates. This bill is a needed step to increase confidence in vaccines, and it could not come at a more critical time.

We are facing a public health epidemic that is impacting all of our patients across different fields of medicine. Our patients who are too young or too sick to be immunized are at even greater risk as more individuals opt out of vaccines. The diseases returning in the absence of sufficient numbers of the

population being immunized are devastating, and deadly. Vaccine hesitancy is a public health crisis and we support the VACCINES Act as one important step to help address it and as a way to better educate the public and our patients.

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### **About the American Academy of Family Physicians**

*Founded in 1947, the AAFP represents 134,600 physicians and medical students nationwide. It is the only medical society devoted solely to primary care. Family physicians conduct approximately one in five office visits -- that's 192 million visits annually or 48 percent more than the next most visited medical specialty. Today, family physicians provide more care for America's underserved and rural populations than any other medical specialty. Family medicine's cornerstone is an ongoing, personal patient-physician relationship focused on integrated care. To learn more about the specialty of family medicine, the AAFP's positions on issues and clinical care, and for downloadable multi-media highlighting family medicine, visit [www.aafp.org/media](http://www.aafp.org/media). For information about health care, health conditions and wellness, please visit the AAFP's award-winning consumer website, [www.familydoctor.org](http://www.familydoctor.org).*

### **About the American Academy of Pediatrics**

*The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 67,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. For more information, visit [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) and follow us on Twitter @AmerAcadPeds.*

### **About the American College of Physicians**

*The [American College of Physicians](http://www.acponline.org) is the largest medical specialty organization in the United States with members in more than 145 countries worldwide. ACP membership includes 154,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness. Follow ACP on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ACP), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ACP), and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/ACP).*

### **About the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists**

*The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (The College), a 501(c)(3) organization, is the nation's leading group of physicians providing health care for women. As a private, voluntary, nonprofit membership organization of more than 58,000 members, The College strongly advocates for quality health care for women, maintains the highest standards of clinical practice and continuing education of its members, promotes patient education, and increases awareness among its members and the public of the changing issues facing women's health care. The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), a 501(c)(6) organization, is its companion.*

### **About the American Osteopathic Association**

*The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) represents more than 145,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and*

osteopathic medical students; promotes public health; encourages scientific research; serves as the primary certifying body for DOs; and is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools. To learn more about DOs and the osteopathic philosophy of medicine, visit [www.DoctorsThatDO.org](http://www.DoctorsThatDO.org).

### **About the American Psychiatric Association**

The American Psychiatric Association, founded in 1844, is the oldest medical association in the country. The APA is also the largest psychiatric association in the world with more than 38,500 physician members specializing in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention and research of mental illnesses. APA's vision is to ensure access to quality psychiatric diagnosis and treatment. For more information please visit [www.psychiatry.org](http://www.psychiatry.org).