

American Academy of Pediatrics  
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



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Vermont Chapter

For more information contact:  
Stephanie Winters  
swinters@vtmd.org | (802) 223-7898

Dear House Health Care Committee Member:

Patients often ask me if I immunized my own three children. Of course! My mother had paralytic polio, a disease so feared when I was a child that I could not use a public swimming pool in the summer for fear of contracting that now almost extinct disease. I have cared for children with meningitis, measles, tetanus, whooping cough, all avoidable diseases. So yes, give your children what I enthusiastically gave mine

Thomas Moseley  
Derby, VT

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Dear House Health Care Committee Member:

I immunized my sons because I love them. I want to protect them from the pain, suffering, and significant risks of vaccine-preventable diseases.

I also want to protect my community from outbreaks of these diseases. Immunizing my family provides a firewall to help prevent the spread of disease.

Robert Tarnas, M.D.  
Bennington, Vermont

Dear House Health Care Committee Member:

My 2nd cousin was the victim of polio in his youth and has struggled with the side effects of that debilitating disease since that time. Many people forget the diseases that we immunize against can have significant long lasting effects on our children. I also vaccinate to help protect those that are unable to vaccinate due to medical problems, in an attempt to sustain herd immunity.

Michelle M.  
South Burlington, Vermont

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Dear House Health Care Committee Member:

I believe it to be deeply hypocritical when parents recognize that their children and families benefit from high vaccination rates against deadly diseases in their community, but take a "philosophical" stance against vaccines for their own children. Science has demonstrated again and again that the benefits of vaccines far outweigh the risks in children with no known sensitivities. I choose to vaccinate my child for his own health and safety, and for the health of my community--particularly the very old, very young, and immuno-compromised. Living in, and benefiting from living in, a civilized community means doing our part to guard against deadly, preventable diseases for all.

Lillie B.  
Essex Junction, VT



Dear House Health Care Committee Member:

The science behind vaccination has been well established for many decades. Ironically, it is the success of public vaccination programs themselves that has created a climate in which some individuals feel confident enough to skip participating in vaccination. Choosing not to vaccinate is essentially a biological ponzi scheme. If only a few choose to piggy back on the herd immunity of the rest of us, the problem can go unnoticed and the non-vaccinating families can take pride in cleverly avoiding the minimal risks of vaccination while not getting sick. If too many of us choose this route, however, the "system" of non-vaccination will inevitably collapse causing stress and risk for the rest of us who did not gamble with the public health. In our individual-centric society in which an online forum opinion is held up as every bit as valuable and reliable as scientific fact, it is hard for folks to accept that their cherished opinions are irrelevant to the cold mechanics of nature that we have studied for so long. Like any fields of scientific inquiry, epidemiology isn't based on opinions or hurt feelings. Sadly, I think scientific literacy and respect for evidence-based medicine has declined to the point which a disturbing number of us think our opinions are more important than rules of nature. In my high school years, I had a paraplegic classmate who had lost his mobility to polio. In my college years, I spent a semester caring for disabled teens, one of whom was from a third world country and had multiple disabilities due to maternal rubella infection during pregnancy. In both cases, I saw a teenager who would for the rest of their lives carry the cost of parental vaccination choices (or lack of access to vaccination.)

Ted Kreider  
Vermont



Dear House Health Care Committee Member:

I choose to immunize my children, my grandchildren, all my patients and all the families I take care of including mothers, fathers, grandparents and ANY caregiver of children.

I choose to support legislation that requires all children to be vaccinated to entry public day care or public schools unless they have a medical contraindication.

I choose to do the above because it is the right thing to do to protect our children, other children and adults.

I choose to vaccinate all children because they do not deserve to become ill or worse with diseases that are preventable.

I choose to vaccinate because I have cared for very ill children with now preventable diseases and I have seen too many children die from many of the diseases that we now can prevent.

I choose the above because it is the safe and RIGHT thing to do for Vermont.

Louis DiNicola  
Randolph

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Dear House Health Care Committee Member:

I am old enough to have seen the devastating effects that vaccine-preventable diseases inflicted upon children unfortunate enough to have contracted them (measles, Hib disease, etc.). Any opportunity to prevent my children from becoming deaf or otherwise injured from these diseases was certainly a reason to celebrate immunization.

Susan B.  
So. Burlington, VT

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Dear House Health Care Committee Member:

I choose to have my children vaccinated because I want to protect them, as well as my friends' newborns who are too young to be immunized, from preventable, dangerous diseases. I care about healthy living for our entire community: feeding our children healthy food, keeping harmful chemicals away from our homes, and keeping serious illnesses from risking the health and lives of all of our kids.

Kim M.  
Burlington, Vermont

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**DEAR HOUSE HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE MEMBER:**

**I CHOOSE TO PROTECT MY CHILDREN OF COURSE BUT ALSO TO  
PROTECT AND HELP IN ANY WAY THOSE CHILDREN WHO  
CANNOT GET VACCINATED FOR MEDICAL REASONS.**

**DUNCAN McNEILL  
BURLINGTON, VT**

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Dear House Health Care Committee Member:

Vaccines save lives. It's that simple. And the best part is that by vaccinating my own children, I can also help keep other people's children and grandparents and friends with chronic illnesses safe from vaccine preventable disease. I do it for my family and my community. My family recently spent two years living in China. The overwhelming feeling there, among expat and local friends, wasn't fear of vaccines but rather fear of not having enough vaccines! My children had their temperature taken every morning at school during bird flu outbreaks. You can be sure that we would have all gladly given up that daily fear for a vaccine!

ALLISON MINDEL  
WORCESTER, VT

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Dear House Health Care Committee Member:

I choose to vaccinate both my preschoolers because I decided the moment I found out I was pregnant, I would protect my children from all harm. I chose to breastfeed them so they would get my antibodies to protect them before they could be vaccinated or their immune system began working. As an instructor of Immunology, I know vaccines are safe. I know vaccines have helped irradiate deadly disease. I demand all public school children be vaccinated unless a Medical Doctor says otherwise. My children have a right to be safe especially from some ill-informed, deadly, philosophical choice. If they can chose not to, then the law should also say my children should not be harmed by it! I should be able to have a choice of not having my child in a school of unvaccinated children from ill-informed parents. The laws need to protect my children as well!

Beth Rodondi  
Island Pond, VT



Dear House Health Care Committee Member:

I am a mother and a pediatrician and I believe in keeping my own children and children in general protected from the ravages of vaccine-preventable illness.

I am a leukemia survivor. A bone marrow transplant saved my life. I received the gift of a new immune system from a stranger. While it was strong enough to cure my cancer, strong enough to get me back to my life and work, it will never be as strong as that of any healthy child: it will never be strong enough for me to receive certain basic immunizations, like MMR. Just as that stranger's gift saved my life, a stranger's choice not to vaccinate their child could put my life back at risk. For me, choosing to immunize your child is an act of love, preventing their potential suffering, your own, and that of a stranger who might turn out to be your neighbor.

Denise Aronzon  
South Burlington, VT



**Dear House Health Care Committee Member:**

I absolutely understand the desire to work out a vaccination schedule that is thoughtful, well-spaced, and not overwhelming. Having suffered through a life-threatening illness, I felt my parents' and family's anguish and wish that they could have protected me from that suffering. Emerging from that illness, it is very hard for me to understand why a parent would pass up the opportunity to safely protect a loved one--and their community. I have learned so much about science and medicine, and what makes a medical practice safe, these past few years. One of the things I learned a lot about was vaccines, because after my transplant I had to receive all those I could over again, as if I were a newborn.

I hope to have children, and I will vaccinate them. I ask you to do the same, for all our sakes.

Susannah M.  
New Haven, Vermont

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Dear House Health Care Committee Member:

It is the right thing to do. The benefits far exceed the risks.

For the protection of my grandchild and the children of Vermont, especially the ones with compromised immunized systems, it is the right thing to do.

Colleen Magne  
Middlesex, VT