

Community Immunity During COVID-19 Act

BACKGROUND

More than 425,000 Americans have lost their lives due the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, and thousands continue to die every day.¹ Although vaccines will be a critical tool to end the pandemic,² they only work if people get vaccinated. Even though authorized COVID-19 vaccines have been proven to be safe and effective,³ reports have already emerged of individuals eligible for initial supplies of vaccine doses hesitant to get immunized.⁴

At the same time that the virus continues to spread, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has also found that immunization rates for other life-saving vaccines have plummeted.⁵ In the face of multiple public health threats, CDC has issued important guidance about immunizations during COVID-19: “Ensuring that routine vaccination is maintained or reinitiated during the COVID-19 pandemic is essential for protecting individuals and communities from vaccine-preventable diseases and outbreaks.”⁶ Research shows that locally led efforts carried out by trusted members of the community like health care providers, public health leaders, and local organizations, can effectively increase immunization rates.⁷

To save lives, stop the spread of the coronavirus, and ensure that children, adolescents, and adults receive the vaccines they need to protect themselves and their communities, we must provide funding to support evidence-based, community-specific initiatives to increase vaccination rates.

The **Community Immunity During COVID-19 Act** would provide robust funding to develop, scale, and evaluate local initiatives to boost vaccination rates during this pandemic, building vaccine confidence in the COVID-19 vaccine and increasing immunization rates for other life-saving vaccines.

SUMMARY

The **Community Immunity During COVID-19 Act** would:

- Provide \$560 million to state and local public health departments to promote Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices-recommended vaccinations during the COVID-19 public health emergency through:
 - Establishing and strengthening partnerships with health care providers, schools, pharmacies, vaccine coalitions, and community-based organizations;
 - Developing culturally and linguistically appropriate information about vaccines and disseminating throughout communities;
 - Conducting outreach to raise awareness about programs like Vaccines for Children;
 - Supporting COVID-19 vaccination initiatives; and
 - Evaluating efforts to improve the effectiveness of future initiatives to promote vaccinations.
- Fund the development and dissemination of vaccine counseling guidance for community immunization providers to be able to effectively communicate with patients about COVID-19 vaccines.

¹ https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases_casesper100klast7days

² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-benefits.html>

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety.html#:~:text=The%20U.S.%20Food%20and%20Drug,findings%20from%20large%20clinical%20trials.>

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/31/world/ohio-offered-nursing-home-workers-early-dibs-on-a-vaccine-many-said-no.html>

⁵ <https://jamanetwork.com/channels/health-forum/fullarticle/2766119>

⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pandemic-guidance/index.html>

⁷ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5703404/>

ENDORSEMENTS

The **Community Immunity During COVID-19 Act** is supported by members of the [Adult Vaccine Access Coalition](#) and:

America's Essential Hospitals; American Academy of Pediatrics; American Association of Colleges of Nursing; American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; American Nurses Association; American Organization for Nursing Leadership; American Osteopathic Association; American Public Health Association; Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum; Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO); Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs; Blue Shield of California; Children's Health Fund; Children's Hospital of Philadelphia; Community Health Partnership of Illinois; Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC); Federation of American Hospitals; First Focus Campaign for Children; HealthConnect One; Illinois Health and Hospital Association; Japanese American Citizens League; Long Term Care Community Coalition; March of Dimes; National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO); National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP); National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners; National Hispanic Medical Association; National League for Nursing; Northwestern Medicine; Physician Assistant Education Association; Social Security Works; Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine; Third Way; Vaccinate Your Family; VNA Health Care

ORIGINAL COSPONSORS

The **Community Immunity During COVID-19 Act** is co-led by Representative Kim Schrier, M.D. (WA-08); Representative Kathy Castor (FL-14); and Representative Ann McLane Kuster (NH-02). The Senate bill is led by Senator Tina Smith (D-MN).

CONTACT

For more information or to cosponsor the bill, contact Jack DiMatteo in Rep. Underwood's office at Jack.DiMatteo@mail.house.gov.