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August 7, 2020

The Honorable Lauren Underwood
U.S. House of Representatives
1118 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Underwood:

Speaking for more than 9,000 pediatric nurse practitioners (PNPs) and pediatric-focused advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) committed to providing optimal health care to children, the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) applauds your leadership in drafting and introducing the “Community Immunity During COVID-19 Act of 2020.” NAPNAP and its members are pleased to endorse this important legislation.

As you are well aware, advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) who concentrate on children’s care, including pediatric nurse practitioners (PNPs), are critically aware of the importance of stable, affordable health coverage in ensuring that families and their children receive the timely health care they need. Practicing in primary care, specialty, and acute care settings, APRNs dedicated to pediatric care have provided quality health care to children and families for more than 40 years in an extensive range of community practice settings including elementary and secondary schools – reaching millions of patients each year. As frontline providers of children’s care – especially in the midst of the current novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, they know that vaccines save lives and provide crucial protection for the health of children, adults and communities.

NAPNAP is extremely concerned that the current pandemic could collide this fall with the annual flu season, potentially overwhelming our health care system’s already overstretched capacity. We were distressed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s May 15 report that immunization rates for all recommended childhood vaccines had dropped precipitously following the March 13 declaration of a national emergency in response to COVID-19, facing children and communities with increased risks for outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases.

We are therefore extremely grateful for your leadership in proposing legislation to provide essential funding to initiate, build and evaluate community initiatives to promote recommended vaccinations during this pandemic. In authorizing funding for state and local public health departments to promote vaccinations recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, your legislation will help to strengthen partnerships between health care providers, including pediatric APRNs and school-based nurses, schools, pharmacies, and community-based organizations to ensure that families are aware of health insurance options and immunization programs such as the Vaccines for Children program. It will also help to develop vaccine counseling guidance for providers and combat misinformation about vaccines, including an eventual COVID-19 vaccine.

In short, the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners appreciates your ability to bring a nursing perspective to our nation’s health care need and particularly to address the critical need to promote vaccinations for children, adolescents and adults as the nation confronts the current public health crisis. NAPNAP is proud to endorse the “Community Immunity During COVID-19 Act of 2020” and is eager to work with you to secure its prompt passage. Thank you again for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Jessica L. Peck, DNP, APRN, CPNP-PC, CNE, CNL, FAANP
President