

January 26, 2012

Hello Senator Giessel;

I have been a nurse in Dillingham for almost 30 years. For the past 10 years I have worked as an Immunization Program Manager within a tribal health corporation. In the two decades of nursing prior to this, I have witnessed Elimination of diseases like HIB and Hepatitis B and Hepatitis A. I can not tell you how immense the feeling is to now be vaccinating a second generation of infants whose young parents were protected from diseases that their parents (the grandparents) were not.

The confusion of multiple pay systems for vaccines, multiple classifications for Who can receive state vaccine, and the elimination of providing adult vaccine to those who do not have equitable or other resources (one of several examples would be any non native person living in rural Alaska), will continue to keep Alaska at the bottom of an immunization rate race that it is on the verge of toppling.

The new state Immunization Registry, VacTrAK has barely come on line. Once it is fully functioning and accepting records from EVERY corner of the state, our rates will naturally climb. The capture of data is elemental for accurate representation of the vaccination rate of Alaska's population.

I applaud your SB 144 to restore funding for vaccines and vaccine delivery. It will be vital to those who see Public Health Centers around the state as a source for flu vaccine every fall. As I start a new career in public health, a cut in funding to support immunization delivery is counter to one of public health's main tenets; to promote the health of All Alaskans. Believe me, I know the benefit of immunization. I have lived it.

Thank you!

Gina Carpenter, RN
Dillingham Alaska