

Alaska State Medical Association

4107 Laurel Street • Anchorage, Alaska 99508 • (907) 562-0304 • (907) 561-2063 (fax)

February 19, 2014

Honorable Cathy Giessel
Alaska Senate
State Capital Room 427
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Senate Bill 169

Dear Senator Giessel:

The Alaska State Medical Association (ASMA) represents physicians statewide and is primarily concerned with the health of all Alaskans.

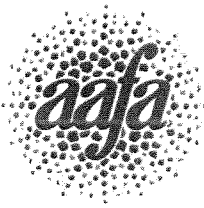
Thank you for introducing Senate Bill 169. It is well documented that vaccines improve the overall health of our communities and can ultimately prove to save future health care costs. ASMA supports your effort to increase the availability of vaccines to Alaskans and supports passage of SB 169.

Please let us know if there is anything we can do to further support passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,



Michael Haugen, JD, MBA.
Executive Director
Alaska State Medical Association



Asthma and Allergy
Foundation of America®

ALASKA CHAPTER

AAFA Alaska Chapter
P.O. Box 201927
Anchorage, AK 99520-1927

February 19, 2014

Dear Senator Giessel,

On behalf of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America - Alaska Chapter, I am writing to you in support of SB 169. This bill, in addition to health promotion would give the state a tool to monitor trends of vaccine usage. In a state with that has many challenges with access to healthcare it is imperative that we can study areas with low vaccination rates to determine if they are caused by a lack of education or by lack of financial access to services.

Adults and children living with asthma are at an increased risk of illness and unfortunate outcomes from a variety of diseases that are currently preventable. Common illnesses like influenza in an asthmatic person can lead to more serious conditions as well as death. However many asthmatics do not receive the flu vaccine either due to a misunderstanding of its benefits or because they do not have the financial resources to do so. It is imperative that patients have access to vaccines at a fiscally appropriate level.

Diseases like pertussis are also preventable with a vaccine however, babies and the elderly are always at risk due to vaccine timing. Asthmatic babies and adults are at even a greater risk as they already live with compromised airways. If these vulnerable populations are exposed to someone with pertussis the outcome can be grim. AAFA Alaska supports any and all programs that will allow the state to study the current levels of pertussis vaccinations in Alaska. While some people make a choice to not get vaccinated, many would like to receive the vaccination but find that their primary clinics do not carry the vaccine. The clinic are making this choice due to the cost of maintaining two sets of documentation for vaccinating children with and without vaccine funding eligibility.

The health and productivity of the people of Alaska depends on your decision. Vaccines have a real, practical and positive impact on the lives of the adults and children. Prevention of disease not only saves lives, but also reduces missed work time and school absences. All things that are good for the people of Alaska.

Sincerely,

Dale Knutsen
Executive Director
AAFA Alaska Chapter



ALASKA ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

35555 Spur Highway #266, Soldotna, AK 99669 akafp@gci.net www.alaskaafp.org 907 258-2255 office 530 326-5612 fax

January 20, 2014

Re: Alaskan Vaccine Association

Dear Senator Giessel:

The Alaska Academy of Family Physicians supports the development of an Alaskan Vaccine Association. Alaska has had low childhood immunization coverage, leaving our children vulnerable to disease outbreaks. It is critical to develop a long term solution to vaccine access in Alaska and improve our children's health. We support the development of a Vaccine Association. It has proven to be successful in other states. A Vaccine Association is a self sustaining solution which facilitates universal purchase of vaccines by collecting payments from health plans, insurers and other payers and remitting funds directly to the State. A Vaccine Association makes it possible for:

- physicians, clinics and hospitals to receive State supplied vaccines at no charge ,
- all children to have easy access to critical vaccines,
- all payers to participate in one of the most efficient, cost effective systems in the country for purchasing and distributing childhood vaccines.

Currently, several small family practice offices find it burdensome to front the cost of vaccines and maintain separate public and private supplies of vaccines. Creating a Vaccine Association will improve the ability of health care providers throughout Alaska to offer vaccines. We support the development of a Vaccine Association this session.

The Alaska Academy of Family Physicians is a state chapter of the American Academy of Family Physicians which was founded in 1947; the AAFP represents more than 100,000 physicians and medical students nation-wide. It is the only medical society devoted solely to primary care. Family medicine's cornerstone is an ongoing, personal patient-physician relationship focused on integrated care.

Thank you for your attention to this important health matter.

Respectfully,

Triin Minton, MD
President-Elect

From: Tomasoski, Therese [<mailto:Therese.Tomasoski@providence.org>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2014 8:48 AM
To: Sen. Cathy Giessel
Subject: Senate Bill 169

Dear Senator Giessel,

For over 30 years, the State of Alaska Immunization Program had a “universal” vaccine program – distributing childhood and adult vaccines to all Alaskans. Vaccine costs increases and federal funding declines led to a reduction in this “universal” program. In 2012, legislation was introduced to provide \$4.5 million in state general funds to fill the gap left by this reduction in federal funding. The intent of House Bill 310 (Senate Bill 140) was to temporarily reinstate funds for underinsured children and underinsured/uninsured adults while permanent solutions were sought. This funding will no longer be available after June 30, 2015. We support Senate Bill 169 to establish a vaccine assessment account and implement a self-sustaining vaccine financing solution that has been implemented in other states to preserve universal access to state-supplied vaccines. This bill provides for a more efficient cost-effective vaccination system and reduces administrative burden for health providers and increases access to vaccines for all Alaskans.

Please help get this bill passed. As a pediatrician I have seen the cost of vaccines be an obstacle for parents deciding whether to vaccinate their child. It is in the best interest of the child and this state to have a universal access to state supplied vaccines. Thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,

Therese Tomasoski, MD

Providence Matanuska Health Care

Phone: 907 761-5900

Fax: 907 761-5975

From: Tsao-Wu, George [mailto:GTsao-Wu@SouthcentralFoundation.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2014 1:14 PM
To: Sen. Cathy Giessel
Subject: Bill 169

Hello Cathy Giessel,

I just want you to know that I support the new bill 169 that you have introduced. As a pediatrician in Alaska since 1996, I have had the privilege of taking care of many children. I am thankful that only a handful of them were infected and injured by bacteria or viruses for which we have vaccines. This is in part because of the generous program that the State of Alaska has had in providing vaccines for children. In order to keep our populace as healthy as possible we definitely need a more permanent solution to vaccine funding and this bill 169 seems like a proven and effective methodology to do just that.

Thanks for taking up the cause for vaccinating our kids!

Sincerely,

George Tsao-Wu, MD

Pediatric Clinic Medical Director

Alaska Native Medical Center

Southcentral Foundation

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Anchorage AK 99508

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