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**Senator Giessel:**

### **Alaska Pharmacist-Immunizers can increase access and lower healthcare costs**

Immunizations reduce the risk of infection by working with the body's natural defenses to help it safely develop immunity to vaccine preventable diseases. Community pharmacists are uniquely positioned to increase immunization rates in Alaska for vaccine-preventable diseases. This is important since the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has indicated that each year approximately 50,000 U.S. adults die from such diseases and their complications (with influenza-related illness accounting for over 70% of such deaths). Additionally, the CDC also has indicated that every \$1 spent on immunizations save over \$10 in direct and indirect societal costs, resulting in aggregate savings of more than \$69 billion in the U.S.

AKPhA supports efforts to expand authority for Alaskan pharmacists to administer all vaccines according to CDC recommendations by reducing burdensome collaborative practice agreements. Studies have shown that states in which pharmacists are granted broad authority to administer vaccines have higher immunization rates.

#### **Key Facts:**

- Most pharmacists are already trained to give vaccinations. Certification is part of pharmacy school curricula and over 250,000 pharmacists have been trained to administer vaccinations in the US.
- In 2013 Alaskan community pharmacists administered over 17,000 vaccinations.
- Pharmacies offer greater access to receive immunizations during evening, weekend and holiday hours than other office based providers.
- Pharmacist can provide a cost-effective means of vaccine delivery that can help lower overall healthcare costs.

The recent outbreak of measles cases in the United States has highlighted the need for continued emphasis on the benefits of vaccinations. Pharmacists are highly educated, trained professionals that have unique access to a large segment of the population as well as in rural areas of Alaska. Legislation that would allow Alaskan pharmacists to administer all vaccines, per CDC recommendations, would significantly improve access to vaccinations and public health as a result. We ask for your support to expand the authority of pharmacists to independently administer vaccinations.

Thank you so much for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Adele Garrison