



February 28, 2012

Honorable Cathy Giessel
State Capitol, Room 7
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Giessel:

Covenant House Alaska (CHA) would like to go on record as supporting SB 144: "An Act temporarily reinstating the child and adult immunization program in the Department of Health and Social Services".

CHA served over 4,000 Alaskan youth ages 13-21 in FY2011. The Health Program at CHA evaluates the immunization status of the youth we serve. Historically, we provided youth the missing vaccines they required. However, because the state no longer provides vaccines for persons over age 18, our efforts in this area have been curtailed. In recent years, the vaccine we provide the most is Tdap; the vaccine that provides protection against whooping cough. This vaccine is particularly important to protect the health of infants and young children. Many of the youth we serve are pregnant, parents of young children, or friends of young people who have young children.

It costs CHA \$50.00 to provide a Tdap vaccine to a young adult. Our current budget cannot support this expense, yet the young adults we serve, and the young children they are in contact with, will benefit greatly from receiving this vaccine.

We support the passage of SB 144. Please feel free to contact me with any questions. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Deirdre A. Cronin
Executive Director