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marchofdimes.com

February 22, 2012

The Honorable Bob Herron
State Capitol, Room 411
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: **Support for House Bill 310 pending in the Senate Finance Committee**

Dear Representative Herron:

We are writing to you to express the support of March of Dimes for **House Bill 310.** Historically, the March of Dimes has been centrally involved in immunization issues as the organization was founded in 1938 with the mission to prevent polio.

The March of Dimes supports ongoing efforts to increase immunization rates so that children are protected from vaccine-preventable diseases to assure that such diseases of the past do not return. In our view, the nation should pursue the goals that all eligible children complete the recommended series of immunizations, and that no family face financial barriers to obtaining full immunization for their children.
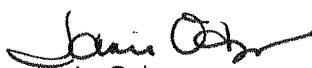
House Bill 310 intends to reinstate the immunization program as it existed and was administered by the Department of Health and Social Services in 2009 by providing additional state funding and authorization to fill the gap left by a reduction in federal funding for immunization.

Childhood immunizations are among the most cost-effective preventive health measures known:

- Every dollar invested in immunizing a child fully saves $16.50 in medical and societal costs.
- Every dollar invested in varicella (chicken pox) vaccine saves $4.37 in direct medical costs and other societal costs.

March of Dimes is a leading nonprofit organization for maternal, infant and child health. With chapters nationwide and its premier event, March for Babies, March of Dimes works to improve the health of women, infants and children. **We urge you bring House Bill 310 before the Senate Finance Committee for a vote and to ensure passage of this important piece of legislation.**

Sincerely,

Janie Odgers
State Director

Cherie Curry
Public Affairs Chair

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