

American  
Academy of  
Pediatrics



**OFFICERS**

*President*

Robert W. Zavooski, M.D.  
Hartford, CT

*President-Elect*

Ronald Angoff, M.D.  
New Haven, CT

*Treasurer*

Leo J. DiStefano, M.D.  
West Hartford, CT

*Secretary*

Sandra Carbonari, M.D.  
Waterbury, CT

*Immediate Past President*

Jeanne M. Marconi, M.D.  
Norwalk, CT

**MEMBERS-AT-LARGE**

Douglas Idelson, M.D.  
New Haven, CT

Carol Leicher, M.D.  
Hartford, CT

Cliff O'Callahan, M.D.  
Middletown, CT

James E. O'Connor, M.D.  
Cheshire, CT

Leonard I. Banco, M.D.  
Hartford, CT

Elsa L. Stone, M.D.  
North Haven, CT

**GOVERNMENT RELATIONS-LOBBYIST**

Judith A. Blei, J.D.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Jillian G. Wood

## HEZEKIAH BEARDSLEY CONNECTICUT CHAPTER

104 HUNGERFORD STREET • HARTFORD, CT 06106 • TEL. (860) 525-9738 • FAX (860) 727-9863

February 21, 2007

### Public Health Committee

Good afternoon, I am Robert Zavooski, MD, MPH, President of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Medical Director of Community Health Services, Inc., a community health center here in Hartford. I am here to express the Academy's position on Senate Bill 6977, An Act Concerning Prevention Strategies for Diseases Caused by the Human Papilloma Virus.

It is impossible to overstate the magnitude of the health benefits enjoyed by each of us from vaccines against communicable diseases. The annual summer polio epidemics (from which children originally were sent away to camp), the birth defects of congenital rubella, deafness or epiglottitis from H. flu today are just unpleasant memories. To say, accurately, that vaccines are by far the most cost effective medical intervention understates the value of parents knowing that today almost every child in America reaches adulthood alive and well, whereas barely a century ago, a minority did.

The new vaccine against the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is the latest to promise eradication of a devastating illness, cervical carcinoma, and is recommended by the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and the American Academy of Pediatrics for all young women before they become sexually active. There is a major difference however, between recommending a vaccine, and recommending that its use be mandated. Vaccines previously mandated for universal use are those which protect the public's health against agents easily communicated, responsible for epidemics, or causing significant morbidity or mortality among those passively exposed to the illness. HPV is not an agent of this sort. There remain moral and ethical questions to be addressed before this vaccine should be mandated for all, questions over which the national Academy of Pediatrics continues to struggle.

There is misinformation about this vaccine that also should be clarified, specifically, the claim that, because it is the first vaccine to prevent a sexually transmitted disease, will consequently encourage children to become sexually active prematurely. To think that our children would interpret a vaccine in this way insults both their intelligence and their morals. The HPV vaccine is also not the first vaccine to prevent a