

**Connecticut Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics
104 Hungerford Street
Hartford, CT 06106
860-52509738**

I am Dr. Sandra Carbonari, President of the CT Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and a practicing pediatrician in Waterbury.

This evening, I am here to support the proposed budget increase of \$11.7 million dollars to expand the state childhood vaccine purchase program. This amount will allow us to cover 3 additional vaccines for all children in the state, and which are recommended by the CDC. We are currently not covering these vaccines fully in our program.

The 3 vaccines are Influenza, Pneumococcal Conjugate, and Hepatitis A.

Influenza

We all have had the flu. The flu is caused by a virus and usually occurs from October through May. The rates of infection are highest among children. Flu symptoms can last a week or longer. For most people, the flu can cause fever, cough, sore throat, headache, chills, muscle aches, and fatigue. Some people (especially those who have other illnesses) can get much sicker, and can develop symptoms such as high fever or pneumonia. Complications of flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes. Children commonly need medical care because of influenza, especially before they turn 5 years old. Each year an average of 20,000 children under the age of 5 are hospitalized because of influenza complications. Flu seasons vary in severity, however some children will die from flu each year. During the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, 345 deaths in children were reported to CDC from April 26, 2009 to May 22, 2010.

Pneumococcal Conjugate

The *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacteria kills more people in the United States each year than all other vaccine-preventable diseases combined (about 40,000). It is commonly thought of as a disease of the elderly, but it also takes its toll among our children. The most frequent cause of pneumonia, bacteremia, sinusitis, and acute otitis media. It is the leading cause of bacterial meningitis in the country, hitting children under one year old the hardest. About 200 children die from invasive pneumococcal disease each year.

Until 2000, pneumococcal vaccine was recommended mostly for adults over 65 years old, and was not licensed at all for children under 2. This is because the only type of vaccine that was available (pneumococcal "polysaccharide" vaccine) doesn't work very well for young children. In 2000, a different type of vaccine (pneumococcal "conjugate" vaccine- PCV7) was licensed that works for children under 2, and it was finally possible to prevent pneumococcal disease in this vulnerable age group. In 2010, a new version of the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13) was approved that protects against even more strains of pneumococcal disease.

Hepatitis A is a serious disease that causes liver inflammation. In the United States, there were an estimated 25,000 new Hepatitis A virus infections in 2007. (However, the official number of reported Hepatitis A cases is much lower since many people who are infected never have symptoms and are never reported to public health officials.) It can range in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a severe illness lasting several months. It is caused by the hepatitis A virus, which is found in the stool of persons with hepatitis A. It is usually spread by close personal contact and sometimes by eating food or drinking water that has been contaminated.

You can protect children from hepatitis A by getting them vaccinated with two doses of hepatitis A vaccine. It is recommended that children receive their first dose between 12-23 months of age, although the vaccine can be given at later visits. The second dose of vaccine should be given at least 6 months following the first dose.

Vaccines are beneficial in that they have helped prevent millions of cases of infectious disease, and hundreds of thousands of deaths. Vaccines have eliminated the scourge of smallpox from the face of the earth, and polio and other diseases have been largely controlled.

Again, we in the pediatric community thank you and the Governor for taking seriously the health of the children in this state