

STANLEY A PLOTKIN, MD
Consultant in Vaccinology

Professor Emeritus of Pediatrics, University of Pennsylvania
Professor Emeritus, Wistar Institute, Philadelphia
Adjunct Professor, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore

215-297-9321 (tel)
215-297-9323 (fax)
215-262-3665 (cell)
stanley.plotkin@vaxconsult.com

February 24, 2014

To Whom This May Concern:

Now that congenital rubella has been eliminated by vaccination of prospective mothers and their male contacts, cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection of the unborn child is the most prevalent congenital infection in the United States. This infection can cause serious damage in the brain and many other organs, but the most common effect, which may occur in the absence of other signs, is deafness. Thus, it is important to inform mothers about cytomegalovirus infection and to institute hearing tests in infants.

Women who are informed about congenital CMV can take steps to avoid infection in pregnancy, particularly through hygienic measures when they contact young children, who are the main vectors of the virus. Reduction of maternal infections will reduce the incidence of the fetal infection.

Hearing tests of both apparently normal newborns, and of course newborns who show abnormalities, will identify those children in need of follow-up. They can be tested for the presence of the CMV, which helps prevent spread, but in addition can be followed by audiologists who will provide hearing aids or other measures to improve hearing. Hearing defects at school age may result in poor performance and impact on education.

I strongly support Connecticut House Bill 5147, because it is in the best interests of children and their families. Some day it may be possible to prevent CMV by vaccination, but at the present time measures such as those supported by this bill are the best ways to reduce the burden caused by this infection.

Yours sincerely,



Stanley A. Plotkin, MD