

February 29, 2016

Michelle Davis, Executive Director
Keith Grellner, Chair
Washington State Board of Health
PO Box 47990
Olympia, WA 98504-7990

Re: Technical Advisory Group Recommendation on Meningococcal Vaccine

Dear Ms. Davis and Mr. Grellner:

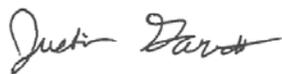
On behalf of the March of Dimes, I am writing regarding the recommendations of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on the meningococcal vaccine. We respectfully ask that the Washington State Board of Health table the findings of the December TAG review until the 2006 immunization criteria can be revisited.

The March of Dimes has been committed to increasing immunization rates against infectious diseases since its founding over 75 years ago, when it funded the research that led to a vaccine for polio, ending the polio epidemic. Meningococcal disease is the leading cause of meningococcal meningitis, an infection that causes swelling in the brain and spinal cord and can result in permanent disability or even death. Anyone can contract meningococcal disease, but it is most common in infants and people 16-21 years of age. A vaccine to immunize children and young adults against meningococcal disease covering 4 of the 5 major causes of bacterial meningitis (strains A, C, W and Y) has been developed and is readily available. The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends *routine* administration (A recommendation) of this vaccine to all children at age 11 or 12 years, with a booster dose at age 16 years old.

At the December TAG meeting, there were more yes votes than no votes for eight of the nine criteria established for consideration of adding a new vaccine for inclusion as a school-entry requirement. However, despite these vote totals, the TAG ended up voting to not recommend requiring both primary and booster dose for school entry. In addition, the TAG also voted to recommend revising the nine-point criteria. Given that the criteria may be revised, the March of Dimes urges that the TAG findings on meningococcal vaccine be tabled until such revisions take place. If the BOH were to approve the TAG recommendation, it would create a gap between what ACIP recommends and what Washington supports for school-entry. The State would then miss an important opportunity to improve immunization rates against a terrible, but preventable, disease.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at jgarrett@marchofdimes.org.

Sincerely,



Justin Garrett
Regional Director of Advocacy & Government Affairs
March of Dimes

3 March 2016

Michelle Davis, Executive Director
Washington State Board of Health
PO Box 47990 Olympia, WA 98504-7990



Dear Ms. Davis:

My name is Trish Parnell and I'm the director of PKIDs (Parents of Kids with Infectious Diseases). As a representative of our organization, I'm contacting you about the recent meningitis vaccine recommendation put forth by TAG.

We'd like to see that recommendation put on hold until, as recommended by the TAG at the December 2015 meeting, the nine-point criteria for consideration of adding a vaccine to school entry requirements is revised and/or a firm decision has been made about revising the criteria.

We believe this vaccine should be added to those required for school entry in the state of Washington, and we believe that the process for that determination that the TAG undertook in December may have highlighted a problem with the current criteria for such additions.

As you know, meningitis is a rare but horrible infection that can damage organs, limbs, hearing, the brain, and even cause death in those infected. This is not a risk any of us should take with our children's health, so we want to ensure all possible precautions are taken.

If you have any questions or would like more information on this topic, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. Our website also provides information about meningitis at: www.pkids.org/meningitis.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We know that what we ask is not a simple thing, and we appreciate your willingness to listen.

Sincerely,

Trish Parnell

PO Box 5666, Vancouver, WA 98668 • 360-695-0293 • www.pkids.org