June 7, 2019

Dr. José Romero, Chair
Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices
1600 Clifton Road NE
Mailstop A27
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027

Dear Dr. Romero and Members of Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP):

The Washington State Board of Health (Board) has the authority under state law RCW 28A.210.140 to adopt rules establishing the immunization requirements for child care or school entry in Washington state. Current Board rules require pertussis vaccination at ages and intervals consistent with the ACIP recommendations. As ongoing research regarding vaccine effectiveness is published, the Board plans to continue to review school and child care requirements to ensure that students are adequately protected against vaccine-preventable diseases.

In a recent article by Dr. James D. Cherry titled, “The 112-Year Odyssey of Pertussis and Pertussis Vaccines—Mistakes Made and Implications for the Future”, Dr. Cherry identified four concerns related to acellular pertussis vaccine currently available in the United States. These concerns primarily focused on initial priming of the immune system and subsequent response when exposure to pertussis occurs among individuals who received a whole-cell vaccine for the initial dose. Dr. Cherry concludes the article by discussing strategies to recognize and treat pertussis in all age groups in order to reduce transmission to infants, and to decrease the circulation of B pertussis in adolescents and adults. His recommendations include ensuring pregnant women receive the tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine between 27 and 36 weeks of gestation and considering administration of the Tdap vaccine every three years for adults and adolescents who originally received the DTaP vaccine.

Although Dr. Cherry’s article outlined well known concerns about the effectiveness and duration of protection with the current acellular pertussis vaccine, the Board is requesting your assistance. Specifically, the Board requests an update or new information regarding any anticipated changes in recommendations for frequency of administration or changes in pertussis vaccination, and whether a new vaccine is anticipated (and, if so, when). This information will help us better respond to individuals who are concerned about vaccine effectiveness and safety. The information will also help in our decisions regarding the requirements for pertussis-containing vaccines for children in school and child care in Washington State. The Board’s mission is to
provide leadership in developing and promoting policies that prevent disease and improve and protect the public's health for all people in Washington. We appreciate your partnership with us in supporting this mission.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Keith Grellner
Chair