

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Thank you for all that you have done to better health outcomes for Americans, particularly for the most vulnerable and underserved communities. For the past three years, a consortium of private health organizations, associations, academia and federal agencies have come together to celebrate Adolescent Immunization Action Week – a week to take action to improve immunization rates for adolescents and young adults and protect our young people from preventable illness. Unfortunately, adolescent vaccination rates remain below pre-pandemic levels and well under federal vaccination goals put forth by the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Production. We ask that you join us in uplifting the importance of immunizations for adolescents by issuing a Presidential Proclamation designating the first week in April, annually, as National Adolescent Immunization Action Week.

Adolescent Immunization Action Week serves as a crucial designated time to address the specific health needs of adolescents and young adults ensuring they receive the recommended immunizations critical for their age group. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there is a gap in immunization rates among adolescents, rendering a substantial portion of our young population susceptible to preventable diseases. This is particularly worrying because some diseases, like meningitis, are so contagious that it requires high immunity rates in a community to avoid an outbreak. As community immunity drops, the risk of preventable disease outbreaks increases.


This concerning trend is particularly pronounced within minority and rural communities, where limited access to healthcare resources compounds the challenge. Data from the CDC underscores disparities in immunization coverage among minority populations, underscoring the urgent need for targeted awareness and vaccination campaigns. The prevalence of medical mistrust within communities of color serves as a formidable barrier to achieving optimal immunization rates. Historical injustices and ongoing discrimination and systemic bias have sown seeds of skepticism and mistrust in healthcare systems, necessitating a focused effort to address these concerns and foster trust through transparent communication and community engagement.

We must also make a concerted effort to address the slew of misinformation surrounding vaccines. Misinformation, particularly disseminated through social media channels, contributes significantly to vaccine hesitancy. In fact, in 2019, the World Health Organization listed vaccines hesitancy among the top ten threats to global health because it threatens to reverse the progress made in tackling vaccine-preventable diseases. Counteracting this misinformation is imperative to enable informed decision-making within communities. Adolescent Immunization Action Week provides an opportunity for experts and community leaders to connect with communities and dispel harmful rhetoric and incorrect information.

Your support through a Presidential Proclamation for Adolescent Immunization Week would convey a powerful message to the nation, emphasizing the significance of adolescent immunization and inspiring action at both individual and community levels. We stand prepared to collaborate with your administration to ensure the success of Adolescent Immunization Action Week and contribute to a future marked by enhanced health and resilience.

Thank you for considering our request, and we look forward to working with you to better protect our adolescents' health in all communities throughout the country.

Sincerely,



Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress