

June 20, 2019

Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road, N.E., Mailstop A27  
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027

Dear ACIP Members:

Our organizations represent patients, consumers, seniors and caregivers who care deeply about the health of our nation and the safety and health of families. We are writing to urge you not to reverse the existing recommendation for coverage of the pneumococcal vaccine. We believe that any limitation on access to this vaccine will negatively affect our members and the patients this vaccine was developed to protect. Please consider the following points:

The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases reports that nearly one million adult cases of pneumococcal disease are reported in the U.S. each year, resulting in 400,000 hospitalizations. Even in this era of multiple treatment modalities, five to seven percent of those hospitalized will die, and a large percentage of them will be seniors.

The economic strain of the preventable illnesses related to this vaccine reaches into the billions, including the cost of hospitalizations, doctor visits and medical treatments for the disease. Saving these costs is entirely feasible given that we have a safe and effective vaccine to prevent the pneumococcal illness.

We also recognize that many Americans, especially seniors, will not be able to afford vaccination if it is not provided by Medicare. Cutting back or eliminating Medicare coverage will affect older adults, especially in underserved populations that already see lower rates of vaccination.

We have the ability to prevent disease and save lives. Why would we not secure the health of our seniors with every safeguard we already have available? Our organizations, together with the populations we represent, strongly encourage you to maintain coverage for the pneumococcal vaccines that can save lives.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,

Sally Greenberg  
Executive Director  
National Consumers League

John Schall  
President, CEO  
Caregiver Action Network

Caregiver Voices United

Karyne Jones  
President, CEO  
National Caucus and Center on Black Aging, Inc.

Mark Gibbons  
President, CEO  
RetireSafe

Howard Bedlin  
Vice President, Public Policy and Advocacy  
National Council on Aging

Sue Peschin  
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Jenna Riemenschneider  
Director of Advocacy and Special Projects  
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Robert Blancato  
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The National Grange

Yanira Cruz  
President, CEO  
National Hispanic Council on Aging

Andrew Scott  
Director of Policy  
Global Liver Institute