

December 19, 2022

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Please Prioritize Immunization Access and Investment in the FY 2023-24 State Executive Budget

Dear Governor Hochul:

The undersigned organizations, which includes those who collectively formed the *Let's Get Immunized NY* campaign nearly two years ago and others, are strongly committed to the reduction of vaccine-preventable illness, improving vaccine access, and supporting responsible investment in our state's immunization infrastructure. We respectfully request your support for several vaccine related priorities and investments in the FY 2023-24 State Executive Budget.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the profound impact that immunization has in preventing severe disease, hospitalization, and death. We commend you for your leadership in ensuring access to these lifesaving vaccines. Despite this tremendous impact on public health and the countless lives that have been saved by vaccination, disinformation about vaccines persists and many communities still experience challenges with accessing vaccines. This unfortunate reality has dangerous consequences. There has been a disturbing backslide in routine childhood vaccination rates as organized efforts to undermine public confidence in vaccines continues. Diseases like measles and polio, once believed to be eliminated in the United States, have returned in our state.

These serious threats to our public health present a critical need to invest in immunization access and infrastructure. We respectfully request inclusion of the following priorities and investments in the FY 2023-24 State Executive Budget.

Support improvements to vaccine recordkeeping and public health surveillance by including language in your Executive Budget to require reporting of all vaccinations given to individuals ages 19 years of age or older to NYSIIS/CIR, moving from an "opt-in" to an opt-out consent provision for reporting in New York (as provided in S75a, Hoylman/A279a, Gottfried). New York is one of only a handful of states or cities that require "opt-in" consent for adults to have their vaccines entered in the immunization registries. Robust immunization registries have numerous benefits. They ensure health

providers have consolidated and accurate immunization records of their patients, prevent over-immunization, and provide State and local Health Departments with the tools and information to help control vaccine-preventable diseases through accurate vaccine tracking. Notably in New York State, all immunizations administered to children less than nineteen years old have been required to be reported to NYSIIS/CIR since 2008. The registries also allow immediate notification of patients and providers if a product recall is required.

Support improvements to vaccine access and investment in public health infrastructure including restoration of New York City's reimbursement for public health to 36% above the base grant under Article 6 which includes funding for vaccination work by local health departments (\$60 million annually). Local health departments have played a critical role in the state's COVID-19 vaccination efforts and are an important point of access for vaccines in our communities, routinely working with health care providers and schools to assure that children receive life-saving childhood immunizations and providing coordination for regional immunization efforts. Underfunding public health has severe consequences both for public health and safety and also for overall health care costs since the cost of treating preventable diseases far outweighs the cost of prevention. We urge a restoration of these funds in the Executive Budget to protect the public's health and to save money.

Support for additional state resources dedicated to a sustained public relations campaign around general vaccine promotion and education focused on the importance of vaccination for all New Yorkers and combatting disinformation efforts. The State's strong #VaccinateNY campaign helped educate, build trust, and generate enthusiasm in the COVID-19 vaccines. We recommend sustaining and extending state resources behind this effort to other vaccines to similarly encourage New Yorkers to receive all recommended vaccines throughout the year.

Investment in strong immunization infrastructure that bolsters access and uptake of vaccines is an investment in New York's overall public health. The undersigned organizations seek to preserve the strong immunization policies and programs in New York State and further strengthen vaccine access and utilization for all. We appreciate your consideration of these important priorities and urge their inclusion in your FY 2023-24 State Executive Budget.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact Vito Grasso at vito@nysafp.org.

Sincerely,

Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, District II

American Nurses Association - New York

Caleb's Feet Foundation Inc

Columbia University Irving Medical Center

Community Pharmacy Association of New York State

Finger Lakes Community Health

Kimberly Coffey Foundation

LeadingAge New York

March of Dimes

Medical Society of the State of New York

NAACP New York State Conference

New York Chapter American College of Physicians Services, Inc.

New York State Academy of Family Physicians

New York State Association of County Health Officials

New York State Association of Health Care Providers

New York State Council of Health-system Pharmacists

New York State Osteopathic Medical Society

New York State Public Health Association

North Country Family Health Center, Watertown, NY

The Nurse Practitioner Association New York State

Nurses Who Vaccinate

Pharmacists Society of the State of New York

Stony Brook Cancer Center

Upstate Medical Center