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American Academy of Pediatrics Shares Pediatrician Stories on Importance of Childhood Vaccinations with Key Senate Committees

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) announced it has collected nearly 200 stories from pediatricians across the country and shared dozens of testimonials with members of the Senate Committee on Finance and the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP). This comes as these two committees prepare for confirmation hearings for Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. for Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), which are taking place Jan. 29 (Finance) and Jan. 30 (HELP).

“As our elected leaders consider nominees who will shape our nation’s public health landscape, pediatricians are speaking up on behalf of children across the country who rely on vaccines to stay safe and healthy,” said **AAP President Susan J. Kressly, MD, FAAP**.

“Pediatricians see firsthand the community benefits of immunization. We’ve heard from our members across the country, in rural communities and urban areas, who work in small practices and who are part of large institutions. Members who have practiced medicine before certain vaccines were on the market and who are new to the workforce and have seen recent resurgences in vaccine-preventable illness among their patients. One unifying theme of these stories: vaccines allow children to grow up healthy and thrive,” said **Dr. Kressly**. “As senators consider nominees for federal healthcare agencies, we hope these testimonies will help paint a picture of just how important vaccinations are to children’s long-term health and wellbeing.”

Excerpts of testimonials shared by AAP member pediatricians are available below:

“As a resident, I cared for a young, unvaccinated child admitted to the pediatric intensive care unit with life-threatening *Streptococcus pneumoniae* meningitis. This devastating illness, once common, has become rare thanks to the widespread use of pneumococcal conjugate vaccines. However, this child was left vulnerable...and {their parents} now faced the anguish of watching their child fight for their life on a ventilator,” said a **pediatrician** from **Portland, Maine**.

“It’s hard for younger pediatricians to believe that, in the 1990s, we would draw a CBC (complete blood count) and blood culture on every infant and toddler with a high fever but no source – and give them a ceftriaxone shot if that white count was high. After all, occult bacteremia and positive blood cultures for pneumococcus were common. I remember holding a baby dying of complications of pneumococcal meningitis at that time. I remember that baby's face to this day - but, thanks to pneumococcal vaccination, have never had to relive that experience since,” said a **pediatrician** from **Raleigh, North Carolina**.

AAP has shared additional stories in its monthly news magazine, AAP News, which can be found [here](#).

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The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 67,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.