

## Talking Points on HF 7

### Childhood immunization is a Public Health Issue

- **Why Immunize?** Protect yourself and protect the community
- **Do vaccines protect me?** Vaccines are the second most effective public health intervention after clean water. Measles cases have decreased 99% in the United States since the vaccine arrived in 1963
- **How do vaccines protect the community?** Measles is highly contagious. 90% of people without immunity will get sick when they are exposed. The more people are immune from vaccination, the less the virus spreads. The vaccinated people are shielding the unvaccinated! Vaccinated people do not get sick when exposed so they stop the spread of the virus. This is called collective immunity or herd immunity
- **How many people have to be immunized herd to work?** 90-95% of people in the community must be immune to prevent the spread of measles.
- **What about the other 5%?** Not everyone can be immunized. Babies less than 12 months are too young for the measles vaccine. Children with cancer, those born with immune deficiencies and those taking some drugs cannot be immunized. Also, vaccines are not 100% effective. The measles vaccine is very good. 97% of people are immune after 2 doses.
- **How are we doing in Iowa now?** We are ranked 43<sup>rd</sup> in the nation for Kindergartners with 2 MMR. Only 91.8% of our 5 year olds are fully immunized for MMR. This is just below or at the threshold for herd immunity
- **How would personal conviction exemption affect immunization rates?** States with philosophical exemptions have lower immunizations rates. Iowa immunization rates have no room to fall! The 2014 epidemic of measles – the worst in 20 years – was widely blamed on California’s philosophical exemption to its mandatory immunization law.
- **Parents have a right to choose if their child is immunized.** Our individual rights sometimes have to yield to the public good because we live together in communities and we are mutually responsible for each other. Federal Courts have repeatedly found legislative vaccine mandates to be constitutional as a means of protecting public health and public safety
- **Are vaccines safe?** Vaccines are one of our safest medical interventions. Serious reactions to measles vaccine occur 1 in a million doses. Penicillin allergy occurs 1 in 10,000 doses. Measles vaccination does not cause autism
- **Are vaccines cost-effective?** The CDC estimates that vaccinations will prevent more than 21 million hospitalizations and 732,000 deaths among children born in the last 20 years and save nearly \$295 billion in direct costs and \$1.38 trillion in total societal costs

**For these reasons the Iowa Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics asks you to vote “NO” on HR 7 and vote against the immunization exemption for personal conviction. Everyone has to do their part to protect the public health of Iowans**