News Release

PEDIATRICIANS PLEASED WITH NEW VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

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The Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (KAAP) applauds the decision by Kansas Department of Health and Environment to include hepatitis A and MenACWY vaccines in school immunization requirements. This regulation will protect Kansas children and make the school environment safe so they can continue to attend school and learn without missing time for preventable illness.

Pediatricians understand the importance of immunization for the health and safety of each individual person and for the public health. Besides clean water there is no other intervention that has had a greater impact on the health and wellbeing of our population than routine immunization. Vaccines save up to three million lives every year across the world.

Hepatitis A rates have declined by more than 95% since the hepatitis A vaccine first became available in 1995. Since 2014, Kansas is one of 18 states that has met the Healthy People 2020 target goal of < 0.3 cases/100,000 population and the inclusion of hepatitis A vaccine into school requirements will help maintain this goal.

On the other hand, Kansas’ MenACWY rate is currently one of the lowest in the country at 72.1% compared to 85.1% for the US and also below the Health People 2020 target of 80%. Kansas will now join that majority of states that do have a requirement for MenACWY vaccine for elementary and secondary schools.

The hepatitis A and meningococcal vaccines can prevent serious infections and should be seen as prevention tools just as important as helmets or seat belts. It is much easier and more effective to prevent disease than to treat it. Preventing hepatitis A and meningococcal infection is good for Kansas children and families.

Vaccines are safe and vaccines are effective. We encourage parents to communicate openly any questions or concerns with their pediatrician or family physician.

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The Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics mission is the attainment by all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults of their full potential for physical, mental, emotional, and social health.