



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

PO Box 47990 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7990

February 6, 2007

The Honorable Eileen Cody
House Health Care and Wellness Committee Chair
Washington State House of Representatives
Post Office Box 40600
Olympia, Washington 98504-0600

Dear Representative Cody:

I am writing as chair of the Washington State Board of Health to support the concept of House Bill 1802, which is scheduled to be heard by your committee February 7. This bill would educate parents and guardians of school children in grades 6 and higher about human papillomavirus (HPV) and inform them about the availability of a vaccine that could prevent cervical cancer. The public health benefits of immunization against HPV are likely to be remarkable. Moreover, many parents do not realize the importance of adolescent immunizations. Many mistakenly believe their children in middle school and high school have outgrown the need for vaccinations and well-child visits. Schools already educate parents about meningococcal disease and the vaccine to combat it. HB 1802 would include HPV in that process at minimal additional costs.

I would recommend a combined education effort for a variety of adolescent vaccines. While the Legislature may require that this effort address meningococcal disease and HPV at a minimum, this could be handled in a single subsection that grants the Department of Health authority to expand the program to cover other vaccines for the same age groups, such as boosters for TDaP (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis) and varicella (chickenpox). Staff at the Board would be happy to work with the sponsor and the committee on specific language.

Thank you for continued leadership on immunization issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Treuman Katz".

Treuman Katz
Chair, Washington State Board of Health

cc: House Care Health Care Committee Members
Washington State Board of Health Members
Ms. Christina Hulet, Governor's Executive Policy Office
Mr. Brian Peyton, Department of Health
Mr. Craig McLaughlin, Washington State Board of Health