



# IDSAs

Infectious Diseases Society of America

## 2007-2008 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

**Donald M. Poretz, MD, FIDSA**  
INFECTIOUS DISEASES PHYSICIANS  
ANNANDALE, VA

President-Elect

**Anne A. Gershon, MD, FIDSA**  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS  
NEW YORK, NY

Vice President

**Richard J. Whitley, MD, FIDSA**  
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM  
BIRMINGHAM, AL

Secretary

**William Schaffner, MD, FIDSA**  
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
NASHVILLE, TN

Treasurer

**Barbara E. Murray, MD, FIDSA**  
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL  
HOUSTON, TX

Immediate Past President

**Henry Masur, MD, FIDSA**  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH  
BETHESDA, MD

**Stephen B. Calderwood, MD, FIDSA**

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL  
BOSTON, MA

**Dale N. Gerding, MD, FIDSA**

HINES VA HOSPITAL  
HINES, IL

**Janet R. Gilsdorf, MD, FIDSA**

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
ANN ARBOR, MI

**Sandra A. Kemmerly, MD, FIDSA**

OCHSNER HEALTH SYSTEM  
NEW ORLEANS, LA

**Daniel R. Kuritzkes, MD, FIDSA**

BRIGHTON AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL  
BOSTON, MA

**Jan E. Patterson, MD, FIDSA**

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER  
AT SAN ANTONIO  
SAN ANTONIO, TX

**Edward J. Septimus, MD, FIDSA**

THE METHODIST HOSPITAL CENTER  
HOUSTON, TX

**Robert A. Weinstein, MD, FIDSA**

JOHN STROGER HOSPITAL OF COOK COUNTY  
CHICAGO, IL

Chief Executive Officer

**Mark A. Leasure**

## IDSAs Headquarters

1300 Wilson Boulevard  
Suite 300

Arlington, VA 22209

**TEL:** (703) 299-0200

**FAX:** (703) 299-0204

**EMAIL ADDRESS:**

[info@idsociety.org](mailto:info@idsociety.org)

**WEBSITE:**

[www.idsociety.org](http://www.idsociety.org)

May 7, 2008

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2204 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Waxman:

I write today to express the strong support and endorsement of the Infectious Diseases Society of America for H.R. 4990, the Vaccines for Children Access Act of 2008, and H.R. 4993, the Vaccines for the Uninsured Adult Act of 2008. These two critical pieces of legislation will provide access to vaccines for millions of children, adolescents and adults and help reduce the number of vaccine-preventable deaths (VPDs) in this country. Your leadership in introducing these bills is greatly appreciated by our members.

IDSAs represents more than 8,000 infectious diseases physicians and scientists devoted to patient care, education, research, prevention, and public health. Our members care for patients of all ages with serious infections, including meningitis, pneumonia, TB, antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections such as MRSA, and those with cancer or transplants who have life-threatening infections caused by unusual microorganisms, food poisoning, and HIV/AIDS, as well as emerging infections.

The use of vaccines to prevent infectious diseases is one of the greatest public health successes of the twentieth century, and vaccines are one of the more cost-effective tools available for disease prevention. For every dollar spent on vaccines, the United States saves up to \$27 in medical and societal costs. Each year, routine childhood immunizations save \$10 billion in direct medical costs and over \$33.4 billion in indirect societal costs. Routine immunizations also prevent an estimated 14 million cases of disease and 33,000 deaths per year. IDSAs strongly supports extending more of this success to adults by strengthening the public sector's ability to immunize this population.

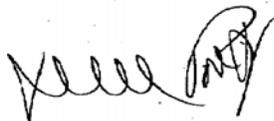
Enactment of the Vaccines for Children Access Act would expand the category of under-insured children and adolescents who are eligible for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program to include under-insured children and adolescents who are vaccinated at any public health clinic, including a state health department clinic. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Section 317 Program is intended to support, among its many responsibilities, immunization at public health clinic settings. However, the 317 Program's capacity is limited by funding, and it cannot cover all needy children. Thus, H.R. 4990 will address a significant gap in childhood immunization coverage.

The Vaccines for the Uninsured Adult Act would provide routinely recommended vaccines to eligible adults through an entitlement program modeled largely on the successful VFC program. In doing so, H.R. 4993 would help reduce the estimated 46,700 deaths per year from adult vaccine-preventable diseases. Unimmunized adults face illness and death from diseases such as influenza, pneumococcal disease, hepatitis B, diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, and rubella. Current levels of vaccine coverage among adults continue to fall well short of the Department of Health and Human Services' recommended goal of 90 percent coverage. This bill will make a huge difference in reversing this trend by providing greater access to available vaccines.

IDSA recognizes the challenges this bill poses in establishing a new mandatory funding program in a time of dwindling resources. However, the enormity of the problem of under-vaccinated adults makes it imperative that Congress act with the utmost urgency to protect the lives of those Americans who can benefit from available vaccines.

Again, thank you for taking the lead on one of the most important public health issues of our day. IDSA appreciates your leadership in introducing these important measures and stands ready to work with you to enact them during the current Congress. Please feel free to contact Michael Ochs, IDSA Government Relations Associate, at (703) 740-4790, or by email at [mochs@idsociety.org](mailto:mochs@idsociety.org), if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donald Poretz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Donald Poretz  
President