



IDSociety of America

2018-2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Cynthia L. Sears, MD, FIDSA

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
BALTIMORE, MD

President-Elect

Thomas M. File, Jr., MD, MSc, FIDSA

SUMMA HEALTH
AKRON, OH

Vice President

Barbara D. Alexander, MD, MHS, FIDSA

DUKE UNIVERSITY
DURHAM, NC

Secretary

Larry K. Pickering, MD, FIDSA

EMORY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
ATLANTA, GA

Treasurer

Helen W. Boucher, MD, FIDSA

TUFTS MEDICAL CENTER
BOSTON, MA

Immediate Past President

Paul G. Auwaerter, MD, MBA, FIDSA

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
BALTIMORE, MD

Angela M. Caliendo, MD, PhD, FIDSA

BROWN UNIVERSITY/RHODE ISLAND HOSPITAL
PROVIDENCE, RI

Jeffrey S. Duchin, MD, FIDSA

PUBLIC HEALTH — SEATTLE & KING COUNTY
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, SEATTLE
SEATTLE, WA

Victoria J. Fraser, MD, FIDSA

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
ST. LOUIS, MO

Ann T. MacIntyre, DO, MHS, FIDSA

PRIVATE PRACTICE
MIAMI, FL

Jeanne Marrazzo, MD, MPH, FIDSA

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
BIRMINGHAM, AL

Daniel P. McQuillen, MD, FIDSA

LAHEY HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER
BURLINGTON, MA

Ighowwherha Ofotokun, MD, MSc, FIDSA

EMORY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
ATLANTA, GA

Susan J. Rehm, MD, FIDSA

CLEVELAND CLINIC
CLEVELAND, OH

Tina Q. Tan, MD, FIDSA

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
FEINBERG SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
CHICAGO, IL

Chief Executive Officer

Christopher D. Busky, CAE

IDSociety Headquarters

1300 Wilson Boulevard

Suite 300

Arlington, VA 22209

TEL: (703) 299-0200

FAX: (703) 299-0204

EMAIL ADDRESS:

info@idsociety.org

WEBSITE:

www.idsociety.org

June 3, 2019

The Honorable Kim Schrier
United States House of Representatives
1123 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eliot Engel
United States House of Representatives
2426 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kurt Schrader
United States House of Representatives
2431 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives:

IDSociety is pleased to offer our strong support for the Vaccine Awareness Campaign to Champion Immunization Nationally and Enhance Safety (VACCINES) Act of 2019 (H.R. 2862/S.1916). IDSociety represents over 11,000 infectious diseases physicians, scientists, public health practitioners and other health care providers committed to the prevention, detection and treatment of infectious diseases, including vaccine-preventable illnesses. We greatly appreciate that this legislation would authorize additional resources to strengthen vaccine surveillance, identify communities with declining immunization rates, undertake research to develop better strategies to boost immunization uptake and disseminate public information about the benefits and safety of immunizations and the dangers of foregoing vaccination. Vaccines are one of the greatest public health successes in history, but their life-saving impact is under threat as misinformation is causing immunization rates to decline.

The interventions authorized by the VACCINES Act are urgently needed. At the end of May 2019, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 971 cases of measles in the United States thus far in 2019. This is the greatest number of cases reported in the U.S. since 1994 when 963 cases were reported for the entire year. Measles can be a serious illness, particularly for those too young or not healthy enough to be vaccinated. Herd immunity, which can only be achieved through high vaccination rates, is essential to protect vulnerable people and prevent illness and death from a preventable infection such as measles. Some measles cases require hospitalization and complications may include long-term problems such as neurodegenerative disease, or even death. Before the measles

The Honorable Michael Burgess, MD
United States House of Representatives
2161 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gus Bilirakis
United States House of Representatives
2227 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
United States House of Representatives
2434 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

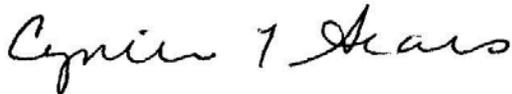
vaccine was available in 1963, measles sickened 3 to 4 million children causing about 500 deaths and 48,000 hospitalizations every year.

Measles is one example, but vaccine-preventable diseases such as pertussis (also known as whooping cough), hepatitis A, hepatitis B, mumps, and seasonal influenza all are serious infections with considerable public health consequences. Prior to the discovery of vaccines, infectious diseases like measles, and pertussis were among the top causes of death for infants and young children, contributing to a staggeringly high infant mortality rate of 20 percent a little more than a century ago in the US. It is imperative that we reverse the dangerous trend of decreasing vaccination rates and halt the comeback to spread of dangerous vaccine-preventable illnesses.

Vaccines are among the most cost-effective investments in the world. According to the CDC, nearly \$406 billion in direct costs and \$1.88 trillion in total society costs were saved since 1994 due to immunizations. Every \$1 spent on childhood vaccines ultimately saves \$10.90. Conversely, the costs of treating vaccine-preventable illnesses are incredibly high. In 2013, the CDC estimated that the cost of hospitalization for measles was between \$4,032 and \$46,060 per person. At the low end, this would mean that since 2010, roughly \$9.7 million was spent on treating measles. At the high end, the cost balloons to \$111.6 million. The 2017 measles outbreak in Minnesota cost the state health department \$1 million. Earlier in 2019, an unvaccinated child in Oregon contracted tetanus, and his care costs were near \$1 million.

IDSA thanks you for your leadership and commitment to immunizations and their essential role in public health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cynthia Sears". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cynthia Sears, MD, FIDSA
President, IDSA