



## American Academy of Nursing Calls for Greater Immunization

*World Health Organization Celebrates World Immunization Week*

**Washington, DC (April 30, 2020)**— The American Academy of Nursing (Academy) releases its new [policy statement](#) on the importance of immunizations to eliminate vaccine-preventable diseases. As researchers around the globe race for a vaccine to combat the novel coronavirus, it is a stark reminder that biomedical discoveries are a vital linchpin to saving lives.

Celebrated the last week of April, the World Health Organization's (WHO) World Immunization Week established its 2020 campaign objectives to reinforce the value of vaccines for children and communities, the need for routine immunizations, and build upon the global progress to invest in vaccines and immunizations. In light of their designation of 2020 as the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, the WHO recognizes the central role that nurses and midwives play in promoting early vaccines and educating the public.<sup>1</sup>

"The American Academy of Nursing has held a long-standing position that to reduce the incidence of disease, particularly in vulnerable populations, immunizations are one of the greatest public health measures," said Eileen Sullivan-Marx, PhD, RN, FAAN, Academy President. "Immunization prevents millions of deaths each year and the healthcare community—particularly in this current pandemic—relies on vaccines to not only provide hope, but eradicate contagious diseases."

According to the WHO, nearly 20 million children in the world do not have the vaccines they need.<sup>2</sup> Now more than ever, it is important to reinforce the safety and efficacy of immunizations and how vigorously studied they are to protect the public. In the United States, all vaccines receive extensive safety testing before they are licensed by the US Food and Drug Administration. In an increasingly global society, our attempts to protect the public and advance "herd" or "community" immunity must rely on science, evidence, and, just as importantly, education. Childhood immunization rates have unfortunately fallen due to the coronavirus pandemic.<sup>3</sup> Even as the country follows safe social distancing procedures during this pandemic, it is vital that children continue to receive their immunizations in a timely manner based on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's childhood immunization schedules.

In the [policy statement](#), the Academy advocates for respectful dialogues with patients and their families who have questions about immunizations. Misinformation and fear can be a driver when individuals are making decisions about vaccinating themselves or their children. Nurses have a professional and ethical duty to provide evidence-based information to the public regarding the importance and safety of immunizations and to be immunized themselves.

---

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization: WHO. (2020, April 24). World Immunization Week 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2020/04/24/default-calendar/world-immunization-week-2020>.

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization: WHO. (2019, December 6). Immunization coverage. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/immunization-coverage>.

<sup>3</sup> Hoffman, J. (2020, April 23). Vaccine Rates Drop Dangerously as Parents Avoid Doctor's Visits. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/23/health/coronavirus-measles-vaccines.html>.

The Academy's immunization policy statement originated from experts within the organization's Child, Adolescent, and Family Expert Panel with input from the Emerging Infectious Diseases as well as the Environmental & Public Health Expert Panels. The Academy's Expert Panels are the organization's thought leadership bodies. Through the Expert Panels, Academy Fellows, with expertise in specific areas, maximize their analytical skills and networks to review the current trends, research, and issues within their field to make informed and evidenced-based recommendations.

Read the full Academy Policy Statement: [Immunization is Key to Eliminating Vaccine-Preventable Diseases](#).

###

#### **About the American Academy of Nursing**

The [American Academy of Nursing](#) serves the public by advancing health policy and practice through the generation, synthesis, and dissemination of nursing knowledge. Academy Fellows are inducted into the organization for their extraordinary contributions to improve health locally and globally. With more than 2,800 Fellows, the Academy represents nursing's most accomplished leaders in policy, research, administration, practice, and academia.

#### **Contact:**

Caroline Kane | 202-777-1173 | [ckane@AANnet.org](mailto:ckane@AANnet.org)