



Legislative Update: Week 7

Good afternoon, Public Health Champions!

My name is [Maija Teppola Baehr](#) and I am your 2019 Legislative Session intern. Throughout the session, I'll be writing a weekly newsletter for you through the IPHA and ICA. My goal with is to provide enough detail that you have high-level talking points for any legislative activity related to public health, while also providing appropriate links and supplemental information so you can quickly and easily access further info for those bills that you're particularly interested in.

Now, into the week 7 recap, we go!

The Beauty of Immunity

I'm sorry. I have to derail our Idaho-centric newsletter for a week to talk about something a little bigger...vaccines. I know, I know! We've been hearing a lot about vaccines in the public health world for the last few years, but all the evidence we have says that vaccine-preventable diseases are only becoming more of a problem. That means we obviously aren't getting the messaging right.

Currently, we're dealing with outbreaks of [Measles across the United States](#), a disease we *had* declared eradicated in 2000. Costa Rica, which declared Measles eradicated over 5 years ago, now has at least one reported case. The disease was spread by an [unvaccinated French boy](#), on vacation with his family. And [Japan is battling](#) it's largest measles outbreak in years.

In the midst of all this, an 18 year old teen from Ohio, Ethan Lindenberger, made national headlines last week when he shared [his story of getting vaccinated](#) after years of trying to persuade his mother to allow him. He reminded us that we can share the evidence and arguments we have in support of vaccinations without shaming or chastising others. In an interview, Ethan was asked what we needed to do to get "the message" about vaccines out to the Vaccination Choice community. His thoughts? We need to continue to present evidence in a kind and supportive way, and we need to talk about vaccine-preventable deaths, and how they're on the rise.

Don't drink and drive. Don't smoke a cigarette near the gas pump. Don't go to the grocery store if you're not vaccinated?

Let's start with being**immunocompromised.** One of the most

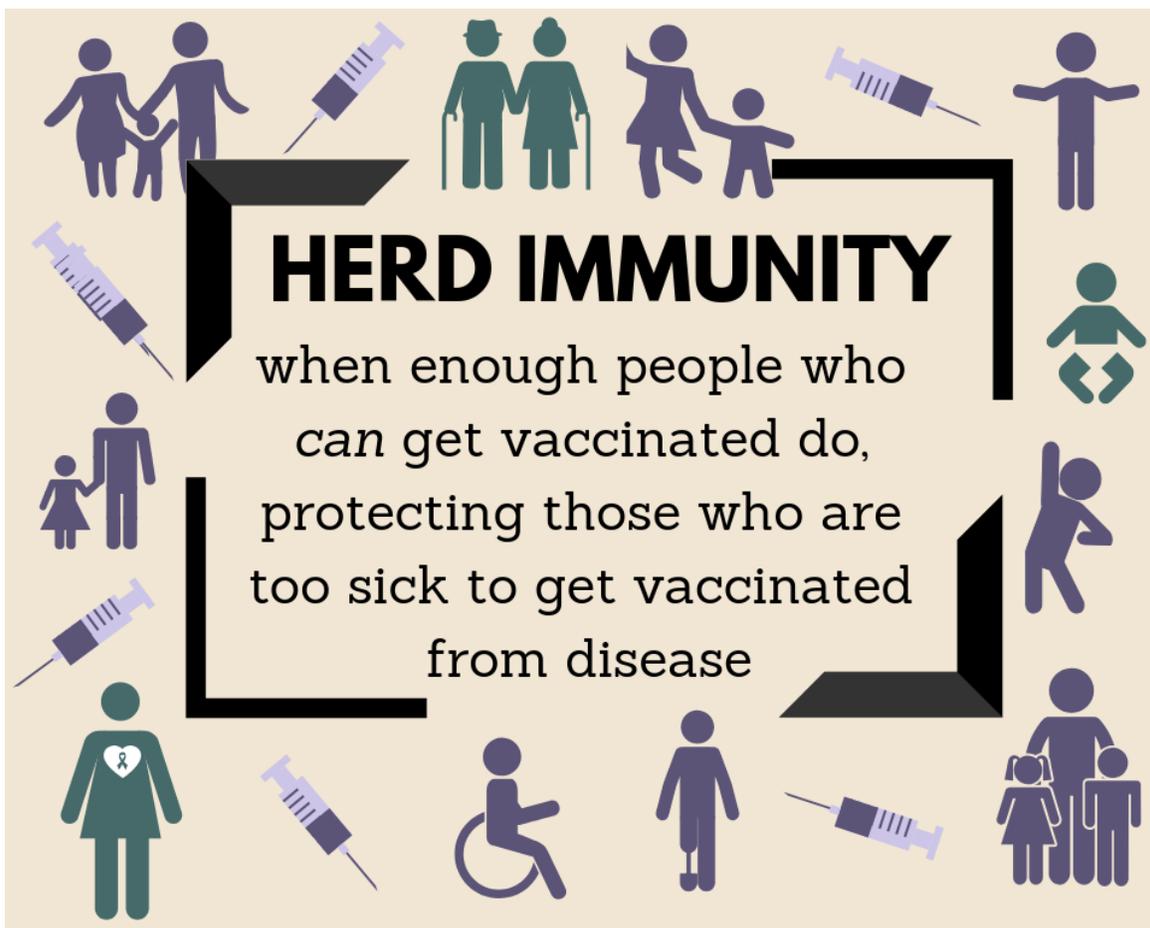
frequent arguments against vaccinations is that it should be a personal choice.

Unfortunately, because diseases are contagious, they don't stick to the person who chooses to go unvaccinated. The personal choice can very quickly harm, and kill, others.

Anyway, back to weak immune systems. When you're immunocompromised, you can be protected against disease through herd immunity - one of the neat miracles of modern medicine. Herd immunity is when enough of us who are "immunocompetent" (healthy & strong enough to be vaccinated) are vaccinated which creates immunity for immunocompromised people! Let me say that one more time for the people in the back.

This is immunity we can create for our community, which protects newborns, people on cancer treatment who cannot get vaccinated for a medical reason. We rake up Fall leaves for the elderly who cannot do it themselves, so let's try and get vaccinated for them too.

People who currently *choose* not to vaccinate believe they are making an informed decision. After all, we did used to believe that microwaves would interfere with pacemakers and that margarine was healthy. We're learning! Remember to give others a break when they share their views on vaccines. And then politely remind them that in 2013, it was estimated that 2.7% of the U.S. population was immunocompromised ([JAMA](#)). That is roughly equivalent to what the population of New York City was at the time. Meaning that over 8.5 million people, in 2013, couldn't get vaccinated and were at risk of diseases like measles, mumps, and Hepatitis A. Diseases that can kill immunocompromised patients. Yes, you may be healthy enough to fight measles or Hepatitis A. Many are not and *don't have the luxury to choose* not to get vaccinated.



More and more Americans feel empowered by their choice not to vaccinate. Let's see if we can empower them to get vaccinated to protect some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

For more education, the CDC (as per usual) is a great place to start. They just launched a new video series "[How Vaccines Work](#)" which follows parents and child on vaccine scheduling and discusses some of the most common questions/concerns parents have about vaccines. And for the overachievers in the room, the CDC also recently published the 13th edition of the "Pink Book" a.k.a. The most complete information we have about vaccines and vaccine-preventable disease. Download it [here](#).

The State of Vaccines in Idaho

In Idaho, Rep. Priscilla Giddings (R-White Bird) introduced [HB 133](#) to require schools to notify parents/guardians of their rights to obtain exemptions from immunizations at the same time they receive information about them. It's currently up for a third reading.

Rep. Giddings also has a draft of a bill to preempt Idaho cities from banning parental immunization exemptions. It's not being allowed a hearing (good) but it may come up in the future.

That means it's time to reach out to the House Health & Welfare Committee members to educate them on all the fun info above!

Now back to our regularly-scheduled programming...

[HB 138](#) - "Expedited Evictions" had it's hearing today. The audio/video is not available for download, yet, but click [here](#) to listen later if you'd like to hear what happened.

[HB 109](#) passed by one vote on Thursday, to create a "maternal mortality" panel to gather data on mothers who die caused by pregnancy or within one year following the end of the pregnancy. It's currently in the Senate awaiting hearing.

[HB 18](#) is on it's 3rd reading in the Senate! This is the bill that will allow Adult Protective Services through local Area Agencies on Aging. This will be a big win for those working to create strong support networks for our aging populations!

Medicaid, welfare & public health services budgets set on Wednesday

JFAC 8:00 am. [Link](#) to JFAC's live stream page.

& speaking of Medicaid expansion. Last week, Governor Little announced he will not allow the Legislature to adjourn without funding Medicaid expansion!

[IPHA/ICA Bill Tracker](#)

As always, please let me know if your organization has any important legislative action or event coming up you'd like included.

Best of Health,
Maija

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