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ARVADA PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES VACCINE POLICY STATEMENT

We firmly believe in the effectiveness of vaccines to prevent serious illness and to save lives.

We firmly believe in the safety of our vaccines.

We firmly believe that all children and young adults, with rare exception, should receive all of the recommended vaccines according to the schedule published by the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

We firmly believe that vaccinating children and young adults may be one of the single most important health-promoting interventions we perform as health care providers and that you can perform as parents/caregivers. The recommended vaccines and their most effective scheduling are the results of years and years of scientific study and data-gathering on millions of children by thousands of our brightest scientists and physicians.

We firmly believe that the decision not to vaccinate not only affects the unvaccinated children, but also puts the entire community at risk.

We firmly believe, based on all available literature, evidence, and current studies that vaccines do not cause autism or other developmental disabilities.

We firmly believe that thimerosal, a preservative that has been in vaccines for decades and now remains only in some of the flu vaccines, does not cause autism or other developmental disabilities. Autism diagnosis rates continue to increase despite having the thimerosal removed in 2001 from all vaccines except influenza vaccines.

These things being said, we recognize that there has always been and will likely always be controversy surrounding vaccination. As pediatric providers, we are committed to stay as up-to-date as possible on vaccine medical advances and studies and to share our medical recommendations and findings with our patients.

The vaccine campaign is truly a victim of its own success. We are extraordinarily lucky to live in an era in which vaccines have made many diseases so rare. It is precisely because vaccines are so effective at preventing illness that we are even discussing whether or not they should be given.

Because of vaccines, many of you have never seen a child with polio, tetanus, whooping cough, bacterial meningitis, diphtheria, or even chickenpox, or know a friend or family member whose child died of one of these diseases. Such successes can make us complacent about the true danger of vaccine-preventable diseases. But a

complacent, “my child is not at risk for these diseases” attitude, if it becomes widespread, can only lead to tragic results. As medical providers, most of us have witnessed children seriously ill from or die from one of these diseases over the course of our careers, and it is something we wish desperately to prevent.

Numerous examples over the years have proven that when vaccine rates in an area dip, even by a little, outbreaks of previously rare diseases occur within a few years. For example, over the past several decades, many people have chosen not to vaccinate their child with the MMR vaccine after publication of a single study (which was later retracted as untrue) that the vaccine might cause autism. As a result of underimmunization, there have been outbreaks of measles and several deaths from complications of measles in Europe and the United States. In Nigeria, after pressure from leaders not to vaccinate children for polio beginning in 2001, polio rates have jumped from 30 cases per year to almost 900 cases per year.

We are making you aware of these facts not to scare or coerce you, but to emphasize the importance of vaccinating your child. We recognize that the choice may be a very emotional one for some parents. We will discuss the risks and benefits of vaccinations in a factual, non-judgmental fashion and let you know why we recommend the current schedule. However, should you have doubts, **please discuss these with your health care provider.** In some cases, we may alter the schedule to accommodate parental concerns or reservations. For some it is currently “trendy” to break up the vaccines, but any advantage of this has not been scientifically shown. **Please be advised that delaying or “breaking up” the vaccines to give one or two at a time over two or more visits goes against expert recommendations, can put your child at risk for serious illness or death, and goes against our medical advice as medical providers.** If immunizations are significantly delayed or inadequate, you will be asked to sign a “Refusal to Vaccinate” form acknowledging your understanding of the above risks to your child and family.

As medical professionals, we feel strongly that vaccinating children on schedule with all currently available routine vaccines is, with rare exception, absolutely the right thing to do for children and young adults. We have no “ulterior motive” for vaccinations, other than sincerely wishing the best health for your child. Thank you for your time in reading this policy, and please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about vaccines with any of us.

Sincerely,

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