



# Coalition of Wisconsin Aging & Health Groups

*Financial Empowerment – Personal Advocacy – Victim Rights*

The Coalition of Wisconsin Aging and Health Groups is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, statewide membership organization that was founded in 1977.

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*“Advocating for all Generations”*

NEWS RELEASE

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## **COALITION OF WISCONSIN AGING & HEALTH GROUPS CALLS ON COMMUNITIES NOT TO FORGET ELDERLY WHEN VACCINATING AGAINST DISEASES**

**MADISON, WI (June 6, 2019)** – The Coalition of Wisconsin Aging & Health Groups (CWAG) today asked community leaders, families and health care professionals statewide not to forget seniors in their communities when vaccinating against diseases.

“We’ve heard a lot of discussion lately over the need to vaccinate children against measles outbreaks in many states, which is extremely important, but those who are over 65 also need to be protected against diseases and now is a good time to do that,” said Rob Gundermann, president and executive director of CWAG. “When you are taking in a child to be vaccinated, offer to take along a grandparent, parent or aging next door neighbor so they too can update their vaccinations. Too often we forget that the elderly can also be among the most vulnerable to preventable diseases and now is a good time to help them to stay healthy.”

Some of the most common vaccinations recommended for seniors by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) include flu shots, shingles (50+), Tdap(tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis) and pneumococcal pneumonia. The CDC indicates each year around 50,000 people die from pneumococcal pneumonia, many who were not vaccinated and a majority being Hispanic and African American.

Gundermann said knowing that, he was recently concerned to learn that the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will soon be considering potentially removing or changing the current recommendation for seniors to be vaccinated against pneumococcal pneumonia. He thinks that’s a terrible idea.

“I think ending or altering the pneumococcal vaccination recommendation would be a disaster for all of us,” said Gundermann. “The reality is that vaccination rates are already low among the elderly and pneumonia can be highly contagious. There’s not a senior out there in Wisconsin or elsewhere who doesn’t know that. But, because of the CDC recommendation, they do know to get these shots and keep themselves protected and healthy. Why, during outbreaks of other diseases due to a lack of people being vaccinated, would we remove this recommendation? It simply doesn’t make sense and it is not good health policy.”

CWAG represents many aging and health groups statewide and supports strong health and vaccination policies. For more information visit [www.cwagwisconsin.org](http://www.cwagwisconsin.org)