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## MONROE COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY VACCINATION STATEMENT

The Monroe County Medical Society firmly believes in the effectiveness of vaccines to prevent serious illness and to save lives. MCMS firmly believes in the safety of vaccines and firmly believes that all children and young adults should receive the recommended vaccines according to the schedule published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics. In addition, MCMS firmly believes that vaccinating children and young adults may be the single most important health-promoting intervention we perform as physicians.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that before the middle of the last century, diseases like whooping cough, polio, measles, *Haemophilus influenzae*, and rubella struck hundreds of thousands of infants, children and adults in the U.S.. Thousands died every year from them. As vaccines were developed and became widely used, rates of these diseases declined until today most of them are nearly gone from our country.

- Nearly everyone in the U.S. got measles before there was a vaccine, and hundreds died from it each year. Today, most doctors have never seen a case of measles.
- More than 15,000 Americans died from diphtheria in 1921, before there was a vaccine. Only one case of diphtheria has been reported to CDC since 2004.
- An epidemic of rubella (German measles) in 1964-65 infected 12½ million Americans, killed 2,000 babies, and caused 11,000 miscarriages. In 2012, 9 cases of rubella were reported to CDC.

The United States has very low rates of vaccine-preventable diseases, but this isn't true everywhere in the world. Only one disease — smallpox — has been totally erased from the planet. Polio no longer occurs in the U.S., but it is still paralyzing children in several African countries. More than 350,000 cases of measles were reported from around the world in 2011, with outbreaks in the Pacific, Asia, Africa, and Europe. In that same year, 90% of measles cases in the U.S. were associated with cases imported from another country. Only the fact that most Americans are vaccinated against measles prevented these clusters of cases from becoming epidemics.

Disease rates are low in the United States today. But if we let ourselves become vulnerable by not vaccinating, a case that could touch off an outbreak of some disease that is currently under control is just a plane ride away.

MCMS recognizes that some individuals may choose to not follow the evidence-based recommendations made by physicians. MCMS, therefore, supports the American Medical Association Code of Medical Ethics statement "It may be ethically permissible for physicians to decline a potential patient when the treatment request is known to be scientifically invalid."