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Coeur d'Alene Pediatrics Vaccine Policy Statement

Coeur d'Alene Pediatrics is dedicated to the well-being of all children, adolescents and young adults.

Vaccinations are the cornerstone of health and wellness.

The family of providers at Coeur d'Alene Pediatrics firmly believe in the effectiveness of vaccines to prevent serious illness and to save lives.

We also believe in the safety of our vaccines.

We feel strongly that all children and young adults 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 also believe – based on all available literature, evidence and current studies – that vaccines do not cause autism or other developmental disabilities.

We believe that vaccinating children and young adults may be the single most important health-promoting intervention we perform as health care providers and that you can perform as parents/caregivers. The recommended vaccines and the schedule by which they are given are the result of years and years of scientific study and data gathered on millions of children by thousands of our brightest scientists and physicians.

These things being said, we recognize that there has always been-and will likely always be-controversy surrounding vaccinations. Indeed, Benjamin Franklin, persuaded by his brother, was opposed to the smallpox vaccine until scientific data convinced him otherwise. Tragically, he had delayed inoculating his favorite son, Franky, who contracted smallpox and died at the age of four leaving Ben with a lifetime of guilt and remorse. Quoting Mr. Franklin's autobiography:

"In 1736, I lost one of my sons, a fine boy of four years old, by the smallpox...I long regretted bitterly and still regret that I had not given it to him by inoculation. This I mention for the sake of parents who omit that operation, on the supposition that they should never forgive themselves if a child died under it, my example showing that the regret may be the same either way, and that, therefore, the safer should be chosen."

The vaccine campaign is truly a victim of its own success. 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 parents have never seen a child with polio, tetanus, whooping cough, bacterial meningitis or even chickenpox. Most people have not known a friend or family member whose child has



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died of one of these diseases. Such success can make us complacent or even lazy about vaccinating. With such attitude becoming widespread, it can only lead to tragic results. As a result of under-immunization, there have been outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. In 2008, the United States recently suffered the largest measles outbreak in over 10 years, all due to under immunization. In 2008 and 2009, haemophilus influenza type B (Hib), a vaccine-preventable disease, caused numerous cases of meningitis unimmunized infants.

We are making you aware of these facts, not to scare 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 do everything we can to convince you that vaccinating according to the schedule is the right thing to do; however, should you have doubts, please discuss these concerns with your health care provider. In some cases, we may alter the schedule to accommodate parental concerns or reservations. **Please be advised, however, that delaying or “breaking up the vaccines” to give one or two at a time over two or more visits goes against expert recommendations and can put your child at risk for serious illness or death, as well as, goes against our medical advice as providers at Coeur d’Alene Pediatrics.** If you decided to follow an alternative vaccination schedule, such additional visits may require additional co-pays on your part. Furthermore, please realize that you will be required to sign a “Refusal to Vaccinate” acknowledgement if vaccinations are delayed or declined.

As medical professionals, we feel very strongly that vaccinating children on the schedule with currently available vaccines is absolutely the right thing to do for all children and young adults. Thank you for your time in reading this policy. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about vaccines with any one of us.

Sincerely,

The Medical Staff at Coeur d’Alene Pediatrics