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January 9, 2012

Dear Friends of Medicine:

Missouri Medicine, the Journal of the Missouri State Medical Association, is publishing the article, "Are Parents Avoiding Vaccinations Because of Safety Fears? Missouri Medicine Addresses a Growing Concern," in its January/February 2012 issue.

Authors Kenneth Haller, MD, and Anthony Scalzo, MD, both of Saint Louis University School of Medicine/SSM Cardinal Glennon Children's Medical Center, examine the science around vaccinations as well as the many messages that parents get from the media, from well intentioned but poorly informed anti-vaccine advocates, and even from doctors that can lead parents to be wary of immunizations for their own children.

To that end, MSMA is embarking on a statewide campaign to encourage physicians and all health care professionals to acknowledge and address the emotional basis of parental vaccine refusal so they can be successful in implementing their patient's vaccination schedule. While a fact-based explanation of vaccine safety is essential, physicians must recognize that they can and should use their experience and expertise to counter the fear-mongering of vaccine deniers.

MSMA is requesting your support and endorsement of this campaign. We will be coordinating statewide media activity, as well as bringing aboard partners to speak to their own local media, staff and patients to assuage parental fear of vaccinations.

Will you please join us? Your name/organization's name will appear in the news release as part of the endorsement. How you wish to support immunizations in your area or organization will be up to you.

We are asking all six of Missouri's Schools of Medicine, MSMA's statewide component societies, the MSMA Alliance, the Missouri Chapters of Pediatrics, ACOG, and Family Medicine, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, the major children's hospitals around the state, and others to join us.

Attached is the *Missouri Medicine* article, the news release, and talking points for messaging to the media.

Our target date to roll out the campaign is the week of January 23, 2012. We would like to hear from you as soon as possible so we can list you on the news release. All we need from you or your organization is an email or phone call with your endorsement of the idea and plan of action.

Please contact MSMA at 573-636-5151 or email at tholloway@msma.org with any questions, and/or your positive endorsement. We look forward to working with you on this worthwhile campaign.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas L. Holloway".

Thomas L. Holloway
MSMA Executive Vice President