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## 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 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, 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 remains in some vaccines, does not cause autism or other developmental disabilities.

We firmly 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 their schedule are the results of decades of scientific study and data gathering on millions of children done by thousands of the brightest scientists and physicians in the world.

These things being said, we recognize that there has always been and likely always will be controversy surrounding vaccination. Indeed, Benjamin Franklin, persuaded by his brother, was opposed to smallpox vaccine until scientific data convinced him otherwise. Tragically, he delayed inoculating his favorite son, Franky, who contracted smallpox and died at the age of 4 leaving Mr. Franklin 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, most of you have never seen a child with polio, tetanus, whooping cough, bacterial meningitis or even chickenpox, or known a friend or family member whose child died

of one of these diseases. Such success can make us complacent or even lazy about vaccination. But such an attitude, if it becomes widespread, can only lead to tragic results.

Over the past several years, many people in Europe have chosen not to vaccinate their children with the MMR vaccine after publication of an unfounded suspicion (later retracted) that the vaccine caused autism. As a result of under immunization, there have been outbreaks of measles and several deaths from complications of measles in Europe. In the United States, there have been yearly outbreaks of the measles since 2013. These outbreaks are the result of unvaccinated travelers bringing measles to the U.S. and the virus coming in contact with communities where groups of people are unvaccinated.

Furthermore, by not vaccinating your child, you are taking selfish advantage of millions of others who do vaccinate their children, which decreases the likelihood that your child will contract one of these diseases. We feel such an attitude to be unacceptable and unsafe.

We are making you aware of these facts not to scare you or coerce you, but to emphasize the importance of vaccinating your child. We recognize that the choice may be an 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 with your health care provider in advance of your visit.** 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 recommendation and can put your child at risk for serious illness or even death and goes against our medical advice as providers at Pediatric Associates, P. A.** Such additional visits will require additional co-pays on your part.

Finally, if you should absolutely refuse to vaccinate your child despite all our efforts, we will ask you to find another health care provider who shares your views. We do not keep a list of such providers, nor would we recommend any such physician. Please recognize that by not vaccinating you are putting your child at unnecessary risk for life-threatening illness, disability and death.

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

Sincerely,

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Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_ date