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### Advocate for immunizations.

Angela L. Myers

*Children's Mercy Hospital*

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## Harry Started It

Congratulations to you and Liz, your staff of one, on the very fine January/February issue of *Missouri Medicine*. Kudos, also, on the world wide web MedHelp affiliation accomplishment.

I thought Dr. Charles Van Way's, "It All Started with Harry" was one of the best summaries and analysis I have ever read on national health care. It should be widely disseminated to our elected officials and something all physicians and the public need to be aware of.

*George Bohigian MD*

*MSMA Member since 1977*

*Professor of Clinical Ophthalmology, Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis*

## Advocate for Immunizations

Recently the Missouri State Medical Association launched an advocacy campaign in support of immunizing the children of the great state of Missouri. This pro-vaccine campaign is getting underway at a particularly opportune time as anti-vaccination rhetoric is increasing in our neighboring state of Kansas. Their legislature recently heard testimony regarding house bill 2094, which would allow for the addition of personal exemptions to the current vaccine exemption law. The authors in the featured articles of the January/February issue artfully bring to light the history of the anti-vaccine movement which has been fueled by bad science and has preyed on parental fears. They also highlight the importance of continued vigilance and call on our humanism as physicians to simultaneously be both active listeners to these fears and stalwart champions of our patients.

I recently took care of an asplenic child who developed disseminated pneumococcal infection with purpura fulminans and had not received the newly recommended 13 valent pneumococcal vaccine. Although this patient's serious infection was not related to vaccine refusal, as the parents had not been offered the vaccine, it underscores the importance of clinicians taking every opportunity to review/update their patients' vaccine status. It remains vital to immunize our

children and constantly advocate for the children of our state and beyond. It is also our moral imperative to protect those who either can't be immunized or are at high risk of invasive infections due to an underlying disease process such as the case in this child.

*Angela Myers MD, MPH*

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