



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Prevention and Community Health
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711 Washington Relay Service

August 31, 2023

SUBJECT: Request to Select Nirsevimab for Immediate Funding through the WVA

Chair Dunn, Members of the Board, and the Washington Vaccine Association -

In accordance with chapter [RCW 70.290.050](#), the Department of Health would like to formally request the Washington Vaccine Association (WVA) select Nirsevimab for immediate funding through the WVA.

Nirsevimab is a new immunization that helps protect infants under 8 months and some older babies at increased risk of severe illness caused by respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). RSV is a seasonal, highly contagious virus that affects 97% of children by the age of 2¹. Low-income children of color are at high risk of severe RSV². Although common, the virus can be dangerous for infants and young children:

- **It is the leading cause of hospitalization for babies less than a year old³.** Each year in the United States, an estimated 58,000-80,000 children younger than 5 years are hospitalized due to RSV infection.⁴ Infants who are hospitalized with RSV may require oxygen, IV fluids, and mechanical ventilation.
- **RSV can have lasting health impacts.** It is the most common cause of bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways in the lungs) and pneumonia in children younger than 1 in the United States⁵ and it increases long-term risks of developing asthma.⁶
- **Each year in the United States RSV leads to approximately 100–300 deaths in children younger than 5 years old.⁷**

In August 2023, Nirsevimab was recommended by the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). It is a long-acting monoclonal antibody product which **has been shown to reduce the risk of both hospitalizations and healthcare visits for RSV in infants by about 80 percent.** It is administered as an injection and provides critical protection during a baby's first RSV season, when they're most at risk for severe illness.

Nirsevimab is expected to be available in the fall of 2023 which coincides with the start of the state's respiratory virus season. Having this new immunization available through the state's Childhood Vaccine Program will help prevent RSV in Washington's babies and infants at a critical time of year.

We appreciate your consideration and continued partnership. If you'd like additional information on Nirsevimab, please contact me at Michele.Roberts@doh.wa.gov.

¹ "RSV and Infants: a Respiratory Disease That Can Be Deadly." American Lung Association. October 20, 2021. <https://www.lung.org/blog/about-rsv-and-infants>

² "RSV Health Equity Action Report." National Minority Quality Forum. August 23 2023. https://rsvequityaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/RSV_Report.pdf

³ "RSV in Infants and Young Children." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. August 21 2023. <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/high-risk/infants-young-children.html>

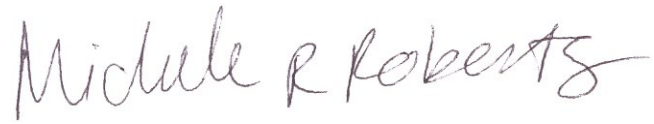
⁴ "RSV in Infants and Young Children." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. August 21 2023. <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/high-risk/infants-young-children.html>

⁵ "RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)." Yale Medicine. August 21 2023. <https://www.yalemedicine.org/conditions/rsv-respiratory-syncytial-virus>

⁶ "Is there a link between RSV and asthma development?" Rachel Zimlich, RN, BSN. Contemporary Pediatrics, September 3, 2019. <https://www.contemporarypediatrics.com/view/there-link-between-rsv-and-asthma-development>

⁷ Hansen CL, Chaves SS, Demont C, Viboud C. Mortality Associated With Influenza and Respiratory Syncytial Virus in the US, 1999-2018. JAMA Network Open. 2022 Feb 1;5(2):e220527.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michele R Roberts".

Michele Roberts, MPH, MCHES

Assistant Secretary - Division of Prevention and Community Health (PCH)

Cc: Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH - Secretary of Health - Department of Health
Lacy Fehrenbach - Chief of Prevention, Safety and Health - Department of Health
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