

WE'RE STILL HERE! 2019

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HERE!**

October 6-12, 2019

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PHI invites you to participate in its 2019 WE'RE STILL HERE! campaign during the week of October 6-12 by going out and spreading the word about the importance of vaccination.

You have no doubt seen stories pop up in the news this year about measles outbreaks in New York, Los Angeles and other cities. Through July 25, the CDC has confirmed 1,164 cases this year—for a vaccine-preventable disease that had been declared eliminated in the US in the year 2000.

Vaccination rates remain high overall in the US, but vaccine exemption rates among infants and school-aged children have been quietly rising, creating pockets of unimmunized individuals that put themselves and others at risk. In response, some states have begun to consider revoking non-medical exemptions.

Too many people these days underestimate the threat of vaccine-preventable diseases because they have no firsthand knowledge of their effects. In a sense, vaccines have become a victim of their own success. Most people have no idea what it's like to contract polio, rubella or the mumps.

“But what role can I play?” you may be asking.

A recent study from a team at Brigham Young University published in *Vaccines* identified talking to people who had vaccine-preventable diseases as one of the most effective ways to change vaccine skeptics' minds. “If your goal is to affect people's decisions about vaccines, this process works much better than trying to combat anti-vaccine information,” said Brian Poole, PhD, a co-investigator on the study. “It shows people that these diseases really are serious diseases, with painful and financial costs, and people need to take them seriously.”

PHI is encouraging you to use WE'RE STILL HERE! week to approach local media outlets, schools or other community groups to talk about your experience and why vaccinating your kids is important. PHI will help by supplying you with a factsheet containing relevant information and talking points. Once you are scheduled to speak or give an interview simply email us at info@post-polio.org or call us at 314-534-0475 and we will get you the resources you need.

So get out there and show them that WE'RE STILL HERE! ■