

February 12, 2015

808 West Spokane Falls Boulevard
Spokane, Washington 99201

Councilmember Fagan,

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Vaccinations are one the greatest public health advancements of the last 100 years in the U.S. People routinely died or were disabled by communicable diseases that have been largely eradicated by immunization. Vaccination programs allow Americans from all walks of life freedom from disease. Individuals undergo immunization not just for themselves, but for the health of the greater community. Some diseases that only inconvenience some can be deadly to others. Immunization is the embodiment of public action for the public good.

The Council appreciates your work on behalf of your district and the City, and it was in that spirit that you were appointed to represent the City on the Spokane Regional Health District Board. The Health District states in its bylaws: “The primary purpose of the Spokane Regional Health District Board of Health is (1) to serve as a governing body of the District; (2) **to unite the municipalities and the county in a cooperative effort to supervise all matters pertaining to the preservation of the life and health of citizens within its jurisdiction**; (3) to comply fully with the requirements of all applicable chapters of Title 70, Revised Code of Washington; (4) **to create and promote prudent public health policy within the District.** [Emphasis added.]

Upon your appointment last year your views on vaccinations were unknown. Since that time you have been quoted regarding the public health value of vaccinations as follows:

“I believe that more will rise to the surface as the vaccination debate heats up. Kind of like the global warming thing, one day there is, and another day there isn’t.” – Spokesman Review

“Do I get vaccinations now? No, I don’t. ... What I tell people is, get your vaccinations at your own risk. Buyer beware.” – Spokesman Review

“If we’re going to make vaccines mandatory, then why not forced sterilization? Why not tracking devices? Because the reason we’re going to be doing it is for the “good of society?” –KHQ

In light of these comments the Council has cause to reconsider your appointment to the Spokane Regional Health District Board. While you have the absolute right to your opinion and to freedom of speech, you do not have an absolute right to represent the

Council and the City with your personal views on an appointed board. The Board of Health has a responsibility to ensure the well-being of the community as a whole and use scientific data to support public policy decisions. Stating that vaccinations somehow have risks that cannot be proven, that they do not have proven benefits to the community, or that vaccinations are somehow comparable to enforced sterilization, is at odds with the mission of the Health District you represent and not supported by scientific data. You have gone beyond fostering a policy debate about public health to spreading rumors and innuendo that reflect poorly on the City of Spokane.

The Council requests that you reconsider or clarify your remarks. If you fail to do so the Council will be compelled to reconsider your appointment representing the City Council on the Spokane Regional Health District board.

Sincerely,

Ben Stuckart
President, Spokane City Council

Amber Waldref
Spokane City Council, District 1

Jon Snyder
Spokane City Council, District 2

Mike Allen
Spokane City Council, District 2

Candace Mumm
Spokane City Council, District 3

Karen Stratton
Spokane City Council, District 3