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Remarks of Amy Madden, M.D., President Maine Medical Association

“No on 1” Campaign Kick-Off Tuesday, February 4, 2020 State House Welcome Center

Good morning. My name is Dr. Amy Madden, and I am a family physician practicing at Belgrade Regional Health Center. I have been honored to care for the people of my central Maine community for the past 17 years.

I currently serve as the President of the Maine Medical Association, a statewide organization representing more than 4300 physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine. One of three fundamental elements of our mission statement is “to promote the health of all Maine citizens”. This is why the MMA has a leading role in the “No on 1” campaign. This campaign to educate Maine voters about the importance of childhood vaccines is perhaps the most important public health initiative of our time.

The Maine Medical Association is proud to be part of the *Maine Families for Vaccines* Coalition (www.mainefamiliesforvaccines.com), an advocacy group with nearly 50 organizations committed to promoting and protecting the public health. We are here to take a stand with our healthcare colleagues, concerned citizens, and parents in opposition to Question 1. After all, MMA members not only care for our communities, we are *part of* our communities.

When I entered medical training in the late 1990s, I remember learning the history of diseases that we likely would never see because of the critical role vaccines have played in protecting the public health.

“These are Koplick spots,” Dr. Pfefferkorn, our clinical instructor, would say, “...little white spots on the insides of the mouth. When you see these spots in a sick child, that’s the first sign of measles.” Measles seemed like a disease I would never encounter, unless I was treating patients in medically under-served areas of the world. That was until last year, when measles outbreaks in under-vaccinated communities

across our country made physicians nationwide review emergency plans in preparation for an outbreak, re-educate ourselves on the presenting symptoms of measles, and field multiple phone calls from concerned patients about the status of their own immunity and whether it was safe for them to visit certain communities. We also rushed to immunize some children whose parents changed their minds about the value of vaccines when they heard the news coverage of these outbreaks.

Maine physicians must speak out on this issue in the best interest of the communities we serve. Our patients look to us for sound, science-based medical advice. Simply put, advances in modern medicine have made vaccine-preventable illnesses essentially a thing of the past. I say essentially because should we lose the protections of community-immunity provided by basic vaccines, we risk the re-emergence and outbreaks of diseases such as measles.

The Maine Medical Association is committed to this cause, and we will continue to do our very best in caring for you, your families, and our communities. We urge Maine voters to vote “NO on Question 1” on March 3rd.

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