



New York State Public Health Association (NYSPHA)

June 10, 2022

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

RE: NYSPHA recommends you sign S6287C, which requires child care providers and healthcare providers be provided with informational materials on the impacts and dangers of congenital cytomegalovirus infection. We also recommend that you direct the NYS Department of Health to include information on a number of other infectious diseases that cause congenital infection and that can be prevented through vaccination and other means.

Dear Governor Hochul,

The New York State Public Health Association (NYSPHA) is pleased to provide our recommendation that you immediately sign this bill, which has passed both houses of the legislature and, additionally, direct the Department of Health to expand its scope. NYSPHA is the New York affiliate of the American Public Health Association (APHA) and serves as the statewide organization for members from all disciplines across the spectrum of public health professionals, organizations, academia, and students pursuing careers in public health. Our mission is to improve the public's health through advocacy, education, networking, and professional development.

Perinatal infections account for 2% to 3% of all congenital anomalies and cytomegalovirus (CMV) is certainly one of the more serious infections in this category. Therefore, it is reasonable to provide education to parents, childcare providers and healthcare providers serving childbearing-age women on the risks and preventive measures for CMV. However, there are many other preventable infectious with the potential to cause harm or even cause death to pregnant women and their babies. The acronym TORCH has been applied to these infections, which includes CMV. TORCH includes Toxoplasmosis, Other (syphilis, varicella-zoster (chickenpox), parvovirus B19), Rubella, Cytomegalovirus (CMV), and Herpes infections¹. These are some of the most common infections associated with congenital anomalies. These conditions are preventable through avoiding exposure to infected persons including children (chickenpox, parvovirus B19, CMV), vaccination (rubella, chickenpox), screening and treatment during pregnancy (syphilis, herpes), adequate cooking of meat (toxoplasmosis), and safe care and handling of pets, especially cats (toxoplasmosis). To make a more significant impact through prevention of all of these perinatal infections that can cause congenital anomalies, any public health campaign, such as is called for in this legislation to educate the public and caregivers should include not just CMV, but these other conditions as well.

NYSPPHA's Recommendation.

NYSPPHA recommends you sign S6287C and direct the Department of Health to expand its scope to include other diseases in the TORCH syndrome.

Sincerely,



Denise C. Tahara, PhD

President

New York State Public Health Association

advocacy@nyspha.org

References:

1) Neu, N. Duchon, J, Zachariah P. Torch infections. Clin Perinatol 2015 Mar;42(1):77-103.

CC: *Elizabeth Fine, Counsel to the Governor*
Karen Persichilli Keogh, Secretary to the Governor