

## **VACCINE STATEMENT**

At Birth and Beyond Pediatrics, we take pride in providing excellent quality care for your children. Our physicians and nurse practitioners work diligently to keep up to date in the latest recommendations and guidelines in order to make sure that your children are always receiving the best medical care possible.

Our governing board, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), has been charged with establishing policies and making recommendations to keep children safe and healthy. Many years of research and evidence has gone into their recommendations, which we then, in turn, base our practice guidelines on. In the past, we have been tolerant and understanding that parents have concerns with vaccines and have used these encounters to provide factual evidence regarding the safety of vaccines and the importance of vaccinations to an individual child and for the safety of all children. Recently, groups in our society have used the Internet to spread a variety of falsehoods regarding vaccinations, and we have had a small group of parents refuse to vaccinate or feel a schedule of vaccines that they have come up with is safer than the schedule recommended by health care experts worldwide.

Due to the recent policy statement in August of 2016 by the AAP that encourages pediatricians to dismiss patients who are unvaccinated, we have had to re-evaluate our policy regarding unvaccinated or under-vaccinated patients using our practice for healthcare. In our community, there has been a resurgence of whooping cough, measles, and mumps, which can be deadly to our children. It is our responsibility to protect the young and immunosuppressed, who haven't yet or are unable to receive vaccines due to age or chemotherapy.

At Birth and Beyond Pediatrics, we firmly believe in the effectiveness of vaccines to prevent serious illnesses and save lives. We believe in the safety of vaccines and that all children should receive all of the recommended vaccines according to the schedule published by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). In addition, we believe, based on all the available literature and evidence, that vaccines do not cause autism or other developmental disabilities. All of the children of our physicians and nurse practitioners have been fully vaccinated.

In light of these recent changes, we will no longer be able to provide care for any unvaccinated or undervaccinated patients. Several of our vaccine-compliant families have expressed concern over possible exposure in our office. We have many patients too young or immunocompromised and unable to receive vaccines, and they rely on us as their healthcare providers to limit exposure to deadly illnesses.

As of October 1, 2016, our practice will not accept new families that do not vaccinate their children. Established or New patients that are behind on the State of Oklahoma required vaccines will be given sufficient time and notice to bring their children up to date. Patients that are behind on vaccinations will be given 3 months to start to catch up vaccinations. IF your child is behind we will provide easy access to getting your child up to date. During that time, we encourage you to bring all questions and concerns to your provider, where you will be given sufficient time to discuss and review evidence-based literature. If after that time you still wish to refuse vaccinations, your records will be released to you and you will be required to establish care with another healthcare who shares your views. We do not keep a list of such providers, nor would we recommend such a physician. Please recognize that by not vaccinating you are putting your child at risk for life-threatening illness and disability, and even death.

We recognize that there is much anti-vaccine rhetoric in the press today that has heightened parents' concerns regarding immunizations. As such some parents choose to pursue an alternate vaccination schedule other than what is outlined by the CDC. There is no data to support that an alternate vaccination schedule is safer for your child or causes your child less stress. As a compromise, we are willing to do alternate vaccine schedules to spread vaccines out at a parent's request. Please be advised, however, that delaying or "breaking up the vaccines" to give one or two at a time over two or more visits goes against expert recommendations, and can put your child at risk for serious illness (or even death) and goes against our medical advice as providers at Birth & Beyond Pediatrics, PC. Such additional visits will require additional co-pays on your part. Furthermore, please realize that you will be required to sign a "Refusal to Vaccinate" acknowledgement in the event of lengthy delays. Families that choose to pursue this option will be required to start vaccinations by age 2 months and complete the CDC recommended series by age 2. Failure to comply with these guidelines will result in dismissal from our practice.

As medical professionals, we feel very strongly that vaccinating your child on schedule with currently available vaccines is absolutely the right thing to do to protect all children and young adults. We recognize that the choice may be a very emotional one for some parents. We will do everything we can to help you understand that vaccinating according to the schedule is the right thing to do. We understand you want what is best for your child and so do we. We know that you are bombarded by conflicting information on vaccine safety. We can help you get the information you need to make an informed decision. Thank you for taking the time to read this policy. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about vaccines with any one of us.

Sincerely,  
Birth and Beyond Pediatrics.