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My name is Cathy Baker, and I am a retired RN.

What's on my mind is vaccinations. Here, in the Pacific NW, we have exceeded 60 cases of measles because of people who refuse to vaccinate their kids.

I am old enough to have had a neighbor with brain damage related to measles.

I am old enough to have a high school acquaintance affected by polio.

I have been a nurse long enough to have seen infants struggle with pertussis (whooping cough). You have likely not seen it. It is horrible. Babies that cough until they turn blue, vomit and spew stringy mucus stuff that they would choke on if the nurse wasn't there to suction it away. It lasts for weeks.

I have been a nurse long enough to see kids intubated in the ICU for days with epiglottitis (the HiB vaccine prevents this).

I have taken care of adults with varicella pneumonia. You think chicken pox is benign? If you are an adult, not so. If you have had shingles (a result of the chicken pox virus lying dormant in nerve roots for decades) you know it can be a painful, years lasting problem.

All these diseases and more can be eradicated with vaccines.

People who choose not to vaccinate do so based on one person's opinion that has long since, and many times over, been debunked.

For many years, we have been protected by "herd" immunity. The more people that are vaccinated, the less likely that others are to get the disease. We live in a time of immunotherapy used to treat cancer, psoriasis, arthritis and other autoimmune diseases. We have scientific advances that allow people to have stem cell and solid organ transplants. That means that there are many more people who live their lives but are

immune compromised. That means that if they are exposed to your child that has measles or other preventable diseases because you chose not to vaccinate for invalid reasons, they could die.

What you consider choice is unconscionable and irresponsible.