



Statement to the World Health Assembly 2014

Prevention of RH Disease

International Pediatric Association

May 2014

The members of WHA have an opportunity to immediately improve global newborn health. Rh disease continues to cause death and lifelong injury for thousands of newly born babies each year. The extremely rapid red cell breakdown causes severe acute anemia and very high jaundice levels with resulting brain injury and /or death. Preventative steps for elimination are efficient and feasible. Administration of well-known and widely available anti-Rh gamma globulin to Rh negative women shortly following birth has virtually eliminated this disease in higher income countries.

Currently the missed opportunity for the preventative provision of an effective Rh globulin is the direct cause of 41,000 stillbirths, 90,000 neonatal deaths and 41,000 children with severe and permanent brain damage (kernicterus) each year. These severe social and economic burdens are preventable.

We urge the members of the World Health Assembly to declare support for public awareness and the global availability of effective anti-Rh gamma globulin. We believe that the prevention of Rh disease should be part of every county health plan.

The IPA works closely with the International Confederation of Midwifery, the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics, the Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Division of WHO and the pediatric societies in each country. The IPA pledges to support Rh disease prevention initiatives with coordinated, vigorous educational campaigns and practice augmentation tools for all providers of maternal and neonatal health care in each of the affected countries.

The International Pediatric Association (IPA) is a non-governmental organization with a membership of 144 National Pediatric Societies from 139 countries, 10 Regional Pediatric Societies representing all areas of the world, and 13 International Pediatric Specialty Societies. The IPA works collaboratively with member societies to mobilize networks of pediatricians for advocacy and programs in child health, working whenever possible with UN agencies. IPA works in close partnership with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) on global vaccine priorities, and with AAP and the Albert B Sabin Vaccine Institute (SVI) on the Measles and Rubella Initiative.

President's & Administrative Office

15, Bacopoulou Str. N. Psychico, Athens 154 51, Greece

Tel.: +30 697 447 7132; Fax: +30 210 777 1663 e-mail: adminoffice@ipa-world.org

Executive Director Office

141 Northwest Point Blvd, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007, USA

Tel.: +1 847 434 4293; Fax: +1 847 228 5027 e-mail: adminoffice@ipa-world.org