

## Unanswered Safety Questions

### Chronic illness in America

In the past 50 years, we have seen a significant decrease in reported cases of infections typically experienced in childhood. At the same time, we have seen an unprecedented and unexplained increase in the number of children suffering from chronic illness and disability.

A study published in 2011 in the journal *Academic Pediatrics* found that an estimated 54.1 percent of children in the U.S. suffered from at least one chronic illness. According to the study:<sup>1</sup>

***“An estimated 43% of U.S. children (32 million) currently have at least 1 of 20 chronic health conditions assessed, increasing to 54.1% when overweight, obesity, or being at risk for developmental delays are included; 19.2% (14.2 million) have conditions resulting in a special health care need..”***

Our Public Health Department needs to be able to tell us why:

- 1 child in 6 is learning disabled<sup>2</sup>
- 1 child in 10 has asthma<sup>4</sup>
- 1 child in 13 has severe food allergies<sup>6</sup>
- 1 in 26 are epileptic<sup>3</sup>
- 1 child in 54 develops autism<sup>5</sup>
- 1 in 300 have diabetes<sup>7</sup>
- 1 in 10 diagnosed with a mental disorder<sup>8</sup>

And they need to tell us what they are doing to improve these rates before they support laws aimed at removing our rights to decline pharmaceutical products which haven't been fully studied to determine if they are associated with these serious, life-long illnesses.

***The decrease in infectious disease rates in our country has not improved the health of our children.***

***Chronic disease and disability in America costs more than TWO TRILLION DOLLARS PER YEAR.<sup>9</sup>***

<sup>1</sup> Bethell CD, Kogan MD, Strickland BS, Schor EL, Robertson J, Newacheck PW. A National and State Profile of Leading Health Problems and Health Care Quality for US Children: Key Insurance Disparities and Across-State Variations. *Academic Pediatrics* May-June 2011; 11(3): S22-S33. (<https://tinyurl.com/y2go5r52>)

<sup>2</sup> Boyle CA, Boulet S et al. Trends in the Prevalence of Developmental Disabilities in US Children 1997-2000. *Pediatrics* May 23, 2011. (<https://tinyurl.com/y5exwwmc>)

<sup>3</sup> Citizens United in Research for Epilepsy What is Epilepsy (<https://tinyurl.com/y3t4xz4r>)

<sup>4</sup> CDC Asthma in the US May 3, 2011 (<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/asthma/>)

<sup>5</sup> Talk About Curing Autism Autism Statistics and Cost (<https://tacanow.org/autism-statistics/>)

<sup>6</sup> Food Allergy Research & Education. Facts and Statistics: How Many People Have Food Allergies? (<https://tinyurl.com/y9ntl6kn>)

<sup>7</sup> Doheny K Type 1 Diabetes on the Rise in Children (<https://tinyurl.com/yy38dnhk>)

<sup>8</sup> Parens E, Johnston J. Mental Health in Children and Adolescents. Pg. 101-106. The Hastings Center Bioethics Briefing Book for Journalists, Policymakers, and Campaigns 2008. (<https://tinyurl.com/y2zabb5o>)

<sup>9</sup> Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease. The Role of Chronic Disease in Higher Health Care Costs and Lower U.S. Economic Growth. Pg. 3. *Almanac of Chronic Disease* 2009. (<https://tinyurl.com/y4cmv2ex>)