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**CONTACT:** Cynthia McReynolds, MCAAP  
(781.895.9850, cmcreynolds@mcaap.org)

**David T. Caron, Jr., PharmD, is Named 2021 MIAP Conference Awardee**

Waltham, Massachusetts – October 28, 2021 – David Caron, Jr, PharmD, Chief Pharmacy Officer and Chief Compliance Officer at Martha’s Vineyard Hospital, has been named the 2021 Massachusetts Immunization Action Partnership (MIAP) Conference Awardee. This annual award recognizes individuals who or groups that have made an outstanding contribution to pediatric immunization in Massachusetts. The recipient of this award is an individual or an organization that has demonstrated leadership, initiative, innovation, collaboration and/or advocacy.

Martha’s Vineyard has an immunization exemption rate for kindergarteners of 8.5%—far higher than the state average of 1.1%. Over 4% of kindergarteners on Martha’s Vineyard had an exemption and no vaccines in 2020—again, higher than the state average of .5%. Most of the exemptions to vaccines for school entry are non-medical. There are areas of the Island where vaccine hesitancy and refusal put the Island at risk of vaccine preventable disease outbreaks.

David Caron recognized a need to address vaccine hesitancy and refusal and started the community-based Martha’s Vineyard Vaccine Task Force. As the Director of Pharmacy at Martha’s Vineyard Hospital and an Island resident, he reached out to key stakeholders to join the Task Force. Task Force members include Island healthcare providers, school administrators, nurses, school nurses, librarians, hospital staff, teachers and community advocates who are interested in improving vaccine confidence to improve immunization rates on Martha’s Vineyard. The Task Force meets regularly to discuss ways in which it can improve vaccine confidence throughout the Island. Members discuss immunization barriers and challenges, and brainstorm solutions. They have developed educational materials and activities which engage parents and Island residents to improve vaccine awareness and confidence.

Prior to COVID, David engaged with Martha’s Vineyard Public Schools to present at an all-Island staff meeting about the Task Force. The Task Force partners, and Martha’s Vineyard Hospital worked to create educational flyers about the importance of vaccination and the low vaccination rates on the Vineyard and distributed them in community locations as a means of education.

Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination is of special interest to David. He partnered with Team Maureen, a Cape nonprofit, to offer an HPV-related education event for providers. This inter-professional virtual event brought together Island medical and dental providers to learn about HPV prevention. Another virtual event offered in partnership with Team Maureen and the MCAAP highlighted the importance of all pediatric vaccines as a means of preventing disease. This event combined personal stories of vaccine preventable illness with a medical presentation on how vaccines work and why they are important. Opportunities for questions and discussion were included. The event also was presented in Portuguese and English.

As a graduate of the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and the University of Kentucky, David has practiced small and rural hospital pharmacy for most of his 30-year career. He has had the pleasure of precepting hundreds of pharmacy students from six colleges of pharmacy during my tenure. In addition to the Martha’s Vineyard Vaccine Task Force, he is involved in his community through various collaborations such as the Council on Aging. His wife, brother, sister-in-law (and soon to be son) are pharmacists, so he has a deep appreciation and connection to the profession. Martha’s Vineyard Hospital is located on an island off the coast of Massachusetts, so being THE healthcare provider to all people is the hallmark of its mission.

MIAP represents the combined effort of the Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences, Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), the Immunization Initiative of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MCAAP) and individuals who share the mission to protect all citizens from vaccine-preventable diseases. This annual pediatric conference provides up-to-date information on the field of pediatric immunization with an emphasis on current immunization recommendations and general immunization updates.

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