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Letters to the Editor, May 4, 2018

Vaccine benefits

As a San Franciscan who supports both local and global public health programs, I was pleased to read “A reminder — vaccines save lives” (Open Forum, April 30) by the CEO of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, who is also the former chancellor of UCSF. I agree with her assessment of the challenges and value of increasing vaccine levels here and abroad. There has been amazing progress in vaccine levels.

The World Health Organization reports that worldwide, the number of 1-year-olds who have received at least one vaccination increased from 22 percent in 1980 to 88 percent in 2016. The Gates Foundation is doing splendid work where private philanthropy can accelerate this progress. But even the biggest foundations cannot solve public health problems without public support. For 30 years, Rep. Nancy Pelosi has been quietly and consistently voting to increase funding for vaccine programs like Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. Across the bay, Rep. Barbara Lee has been championing U.S. support for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria since that program started. Be assured that many members of the public and representatives in government support increasing vaccination levels.

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