



Improvements to Medicare Vaccine Access

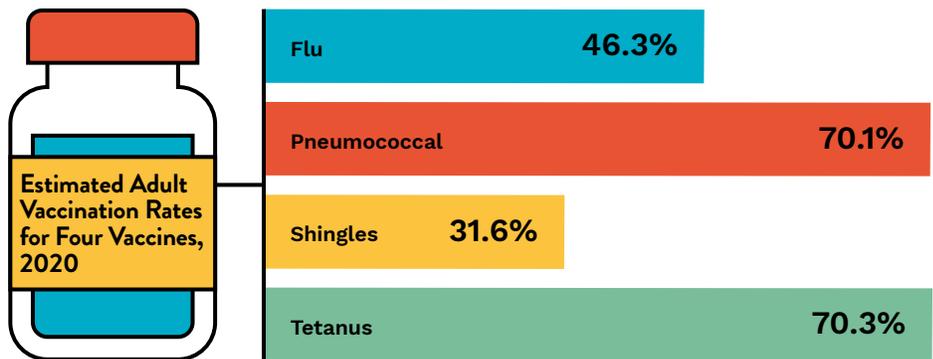
Immunizations are a cornerstone of our nation’s disease prevention efforts and have demonstrated a long track record of success as a cost-effective means of reducing disease burden and saving lives.

Despite the well-known benefits of immunizations, three out of four adults are missing one or more of four critical vaccines that protect against flu, pneumococcal, shingles, Td or Tdap. Only 20% of adults have received all recommended vaccines.¹ Low adult immunization rates have repercussions for individuals, families and entire communities.

Barriers to adult immunization, such as the inability to pay due to co-pays and gaps in coverage, have contributed to low vaccine rates.

Vaccines are essential across the life course but are especially important for healthy aging. Unvaccinated adults can unknowingly spread vaccine-preventable diseases to children who are too young to be immunized or to immunocompromised persons. With the aging of the U.S. population, the public health impact of vaccine preventable diseases and their complications among older adults is likely to grow.

**ONLY 20% OF ADULTS
HAVE RECEIVED ALL
RECOMMENDED VACCINES**



Source: GAO analysis of Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance system Data. | GAO-22-105334

1 [CDC’s Vaccines for Adults \(VFA\)](#)

Free Vaccines in Medicare

Recent federal policy changes are expected to greatly improve access to and utilization of adult vaccines. Starting January 2023, adults with Medicare Part D coverage have access to Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)-recommended vaccines at no cost, including Shingles, Tetanus-Diphtheria-Whooping Cough and future vaccines. This makes vaccine coverage consistent with private insurance plans, the U.S. military, Medicare Part B vaccines (COVID-19, influenza, pneumococcal, Hepatitis B), and soon, Medicaid.

Had this change been in effect in 2021, the 3.4 million people with Medicare who received vaccines under Part D coverage would have saved an average of nearly \$70 per person, saving an estimated \$234 million on recommended Part D vaccines. As new vaccines are approved, even more people with Medicare will benefit from this provision. Vaccine uptake will be higher because the lower out-of-pocket costs will encourage folks to get these important vaccines.² This improved access will lead to fewer hospitalizations and doctor visits, prevent serious health complications and death and bring savings to U.S. taxpayers and the health care system.

Improving the Landscape for Vaccine Access

With expanded Medicare vaccine coverage, additional challenges for patients must be addressed. Providers across the health care system continue to face burdens with purchasing, storing, administering and billing for vaccines for Medicare beneficiaries, which inhibits access. Availability of immunization providers in rural and underserved areas results in vaccine coverage gaps.

AVAC RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING POLICY CHANGES:

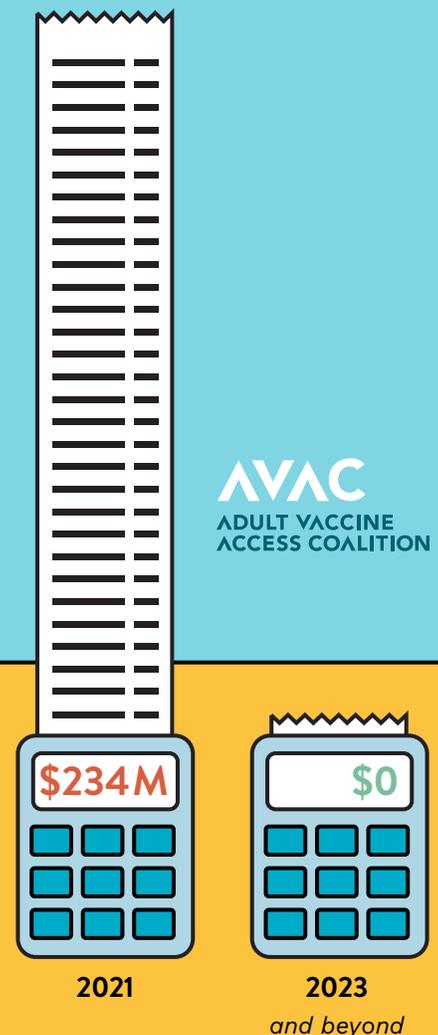
Ensure that immunization providers receive adequate reimbursement for the cost of vaccines and supplies, as well as the time providers spend with patients for vaccine counseling and administration, will go a long way toward an efficient, robust and cost saving immunization system for Medicare beneficiaries.

Enhance Medicare vaccine data quality and completeness, including improvements to reporting and interoperability between electronic health records and state and local public health data systems.

² Medicare Part D Enrollee Savings from Elimination of Vaccine Cost-Sharing

About AVAC

The Adult Vaccine Access Coalition (AVAC) is a diverse group of health care providers, vaccine innovators, pharmacies, public health organizations and patient and consumer groups. AVAC's mission is to raise awareness, improve access and increase utilization of vaccines among adults. Near universal access to immunizations for children has been one of the greatest public health accomplishments of the 20th century. AVAC seeks to achieve the same level of success for adult immunization.



IN 2021, 3.4 MILLION OLDER ADULTS PAID \$234 MILLION IN OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS FOR VACCINES. THANKS TO CONGRESSIONAL ACTION, MEDICARE PART D ENROLLEES CAN NOW GET THOSE VACCINES FOR FREE.