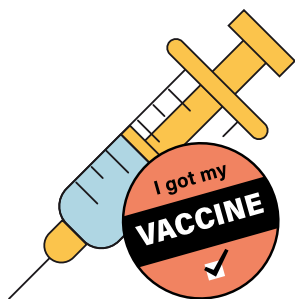


Improving Vaccination Rates Through Strengthening and Sustaining Immunization Infrastructure

Immunizations are a proven and highly cost-effective form of preventive medicine that for decades have helped save millions of lives. Vaccines have eradicated smallpox globally, eliminated polio in the U.S., and dramatically reduced the spread of many more crippling and potentially life-threatening diseases such as diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps and rubella. They also prevent the spread of common infectious and potentially fatal diseases such as chickenpox (varicella), influenza, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, meningococcal disease, pneumococcal disease and whooping cough (pertussis). Vaccines not only protect those who get immunized but also those who can't—such as infants too young to be vaccinated or those who suffer from health conditions that preclude vaccinations. Maintaining this “community immunity” is essential to protecting the individual and that person’s family, workplace and neighborhood.

Approximately 50,000 adults die each year from vaccine-preventable diseases in the US. Millions more suffer from vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs), causing them to miss work and leaving some unable to care for those who depend on them. The United States spends \$26.5 billion annually treating four vaccine-preventable diseases in adults over the age of 50. Despite the demonstrated benefits of vaccination, adult immunization coverage lags behind. Three out of four adults are missing one or more routinely recommended vaccines. An estimated 37.1 million adolescents and adults missed doses of recommended vaccines between December 2020 and July 2021 compared to the same time in 2019.



A Strong Immunization Infrastructure Can Boost Immunization Rates

A strong immunization infrastructure promotes disease prevention and mitigates the potential widespread consequences of a devastating disease outbreak. It supports activities for state and local health officials to carry out activities vital to the prevention, detection and mitigation of vaccine-preventable conditions and can help to increase and sustain immunization coverage rates.

Challenges to Adult Immunization

Numerous barriers have prevented progress in increasing adult immunization rates, particularly for low-income, at-risk, underserved communities, where vaccination is less accessible. Factors associated with low vaccination rates include:

- ◆ Lack of immunization coordination among health care providers and across the health care system, as many adults see multiple providers.
- ◆ Lack of knowledge regarding the recommended adult immunization schedule and the risks and consequences of VPDs.
- ◆ Inability of patients to pay for vaccines due to lack of insurance.
- ◆ Legal and administrative barriers at the state and federal levels.
- ◆ Lack or underuse of immunization data systems.
- ◆ Skepticism regarding vaccine safety and effectiveness among patients.

Recommendations for Congress

SUPPORT FUNDING FOR THE NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Immunization Program is at the center of immunization infrastructure in the United States, supporting state, local and territorial immunization programs. In addition to providing some vaccine doses, it provides states with the resources and tools necessary to conduct outreach, education and provider support; operate immunization data systems; to safely store, handle and administer vaccines, outbreak surveillance and response.

MODERNIZE IMMUNIZATION DATA SYSTEMS

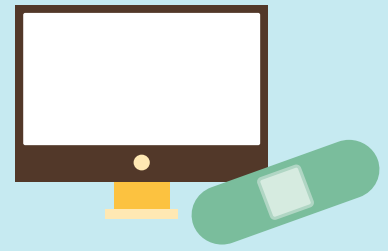
Immunization Information Systems are confidential systems that exchange data with electronic health records and allow providers real-time access to comprehensive, consolidated immunization records for individuals. Integrating immunization data into the healthcare system is critical to expand vaccine utilization and can help patients keep track of their vaccination history (preventing both over- and under-vaccination).

SUPPORT IMMUNIZATION PROVIDERS

It is essential to build and support the capacity of immunization the full spectrum of immunization provider and settings, including supporting providers at local health departments to meet help protect against vaccine-preventable diseases. In addition to health care providers, there is an essential role for local partners and community-based organizations to help build awareness and trust in communities, which will improve access to immunizations.

PRIORITIZE EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Education to providers is essential to helping them know about new vaccine recommendations, proper vaccine storage and handling, and the importance of routinely assessing, recommending and referring based on the vaccine needs of their patients. Outreach to adults on their immunization needs can have far-reaching impacts, particularly to at risk populations such as adults with chronic conditions, pregnant women, and healthcare workers. Patient education should be culturally and linguistically appropriate, reflecting health and language proficiency.



Elements of an Effective Immunization Infrastructure

- ◆ State and local immunization programs
- ◆ Outreach, education and provider support
- ◆ Immunization information systems (IIS)
- ◆ Vaccine storage, handling, administration and safety
- ◆ Surveillance and outbreak response
- ◆ Vaccines for uninsured children and adults
- ◆ Quality measures
- ◆ Disaster response

AVAC
ADULT VACCINE
ACCESS COALITION

About AVAC

The Adult Vaccine Access Coalition (AVAC) is a diverse group of health care providers, vaccine innovators, pharmacies, public health organizations, 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.

www.adultvaccinesnow.org