

Trends in vaccination during the pandemic

We continue to monitor trends in doses administered to school-age children (4-6 years) and adolescents (11-12 years) by analyzing data from the Minnesota Immunization Information Connection (MIIC). We have been comparing doses of routinely recommended vaccines for 2020 to the same time period in 2019 (January through current month). When we added July to our analysis, we found that the gap in weekly doses administered between 2019 and 2020 continued to narrow for school-age children. Specifically, we found that the percentage decline for overall doses administered for children age 4-6 years was 29%, and for adolescents 11-12 years, it was 28%. Just four weeks earlier, the overall decline for each age group was slightly higher, 34% and 32% respectively. We are closing the gap, which is encouraging, but there is much work ahead to fully catch up.

Returning to normal vaccination activity levels for school-age children and adolescents remains slow. This suggests the pandemic continues to have an impact on vaccination. Here is what partners can do to continue to reverse the trend that the pandemic caused:

- Schools - continue to follow school immunization laws.
- Providers and clinics - call in children due or overdue for routine vaccinations to get caught up.
- Local public health - direct local clinics to resources for catching children up.

COVID-19 vaccine update

There are many unknowns about a COVID-19 vaccine, including when doses will be approved for use, which groups will be prioritized to receive an early limited supply of doses, and how it will be distributed to states. Here's what we do know at this point:

- The first doses of COVID-19 vaccine will probably be available in limited supply in early 2021.
- COVID-19 vaccine distribution will adjust as the volume of vaccine doses increases, moving from targeted to broader populations reached in a phased approach.
- Federal guidance on recommended priority groups from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) will be available in the fall of 2020.
- There will be several vaccine presentations available and the products will likely not be interchangeable.
- Two doses will likely be needed at least for some of the products.

We are continuing to plan for how vaccine will be distributed, but are waiting for further guidance from the federal government to be able to finalize things. In the meantime, health care partners should make sure they are sending timely, product-specific immunization data to MIIC. We are identifying provider organizations that may need to improve their data exchange with MIIC to meet these needs. If you have questions, please contact the MIIC Help Desk (health.mi-ichelp@state.mn.us). Additionally, look for a survey this fall where we will collect your intent to vaccinate with COVID-19 vaccine and ask for information on your patient population.

Fall flu guide is coming

The *2020-21 Minnesota Fall Flu Guide* will be posted on Influenza Vaccine Information for Health Professionals (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/flu/hcp/vaccine/) when it is ready. You can sign up to get an email alert by clicking on the red envelope in the top right corner of the web page. The guide will reflect the latest CDC recommendations including additional considerations for vaccinating during COVID-19.

Strongly promote flu vaccination this season

Flu and COVID-19 may both be circulating this fall/winter. Increasing flu vaccination will be very important this year, especially for people at higher risk of serious illness from flu and COVID-19. Some key messages for this flu season include:

- It's more important than ever to get a flu vaccine to help protect you and your family, as well as to help not overwhelm the health care system.
- September/October are great times to get vaccinated. If you don't get vaccinated during that time, you can still get vaccinated November through January.
- Ongoing COVID-19 activity may affect where, when, and how flu vaccines are given.

2020-21 MnVFC flu vaccine distribution

Minnesota Vaccines for Children (MnVFC) 2020-21 flu vaccine began shipping to providers this month. If you provided your email address with your flu prebook, you will receive a confirmation email when we process your order. See the Aug. 12 MnVFC Announcement (www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/hcp/mnvfc/announcements.html) for more information.

Immunization Quality Improvement for Providers (IQIP) update

If your clinic would like help recalling school-age children for catch-up vaccination or getting ready for flu season and COVID-19 vaccine distribution, contact our talented IQIP site visitors! They can help you:

- Use MIIC to measure immunization coverage rates.
- Examine your immunization work flow and find areas to improve.
- Develop projects focused on increasing coverage rates and identifying patients who need immunizations.

If you are interested, reach out to your MIIC regional coordinator: MIIC Regions and Regional Coordinators (www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/miic/participate/regions.html).

Current VISs, August 2020

Federal law requires anyone who vaccinates to give all patients, or their parents or legal guardians, the appropriate Vaccine Information Statements (VIS) before giving vaccines. Check to make sure you have the most Current VISs (www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/current-vis.html) for your practice. Updated since January 2020:

- DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis) - interim (4/1/20)
- Hepatitis A - interim (7/28/20)
- Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis) - interim (4/1/20)
- Td (Tetanus, Diphtheria) - interim (4/1/20)
- Yellow Fever (4/1/20)