



**To:** Immunization Program Managers  
State Title V/MCH Directors

**From:** Melinda Wharton, MD MPH  
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**Date:** July 2, 2020

**Re:** Pediatric Immunizations and the COVID-19 Pandemic

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The CDC recently reported declines in ordering of pediatric vaccines through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program as well as decreases in vaccine administration from early March through mid-April 2020.<sup>1</sup> An increase in unvaccinated or under-vaccinated populations, coupled with decreases in social distancing, raises the likelihood of outbreaks of diseases such as measles. Immunization and Title V/Maternal and Child Health (MCH) programs are well positioned to support a public health approach in ensuring continued promotion and delivery of pediatric immunizations.

State immunization programs, working closely with city, county, and tribal health departments, work to achieve and sustain high immunization coverage levels across the life span. State immunization programs also work in close collaboration with the more than 38,000 pediatric health care provider practices enrolled in the VFC program, providing crucial guidance and support to these critical partners.

State Title V/MCH programs promote comprehensive well-child and well-adolescent visits through support of direct services as well as public health services and systems. Forty-four states have chosen to report on the National Performance Measure (NPM) related to medical home, and 37 states report on the adolescent well-visit NPM.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Santoli JM, Lindley MC, DeSilva MB, et al. Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Routine Pediatric Vaccine Ordering and Administration — United States, 2020. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69:591–593. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6919e2>

<sup>2</sup> Title V Information System. Available at: <https://mchb.tvisdata.hrsa.gov/PrioritiesAndMeasures/NPMDistribution>. Last accessed May 29, 2020.

Additionally, states report on the number of children, ages 19 through 35 months, that completed the combined 7-vaccine series (4:3:1:3\*:3:1:4) as well as vaccination coverage rates for specific vaccines, including influenza, Tdap, HPV, and meningitis (National Outcome Measures 22.1 – 22.5).

Partnerships between the state's Title V/MCH program and immunization program exist in many states, particularly related to the development and support of promotional immunization messaging and coordination in conducting program outreach. CDC's Immunization Services Division (ISD) and HRSA's Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) fully support and encourage robust collaboration to advance the goals of both programs in promoting children's health. Collaboration between these two programs can ensure high levels of pediatric vaccination, not only during the COVID-19 pandemic, but at all times, and also across other MCH populations (e.g., pregnant women). Combined efforts also may reduce disparities among populations, whether by race/ethnicity or urban/rural location.

Specific opportunities for partnership include:

- Connecting families who are recently uninsured or underinsured with immunization services including ensuring they are knowledgeable about the availability of no-cost vaccines through the VFC program;
- Engaging providers to enhance VFC program participation;
- Distributing messages promoting back-to-school or school-entry vaccines and seasonal influenza vaccines – for both children and adults; and
- Supporting special immunization clinics to reach at risk or under vaccinated populations.

In addition to the opportunities highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic response, ongoing opportunities for collaboration include:

- Coordinating identification and follow-up of pregnant women and infants at risk for perinatal Hepatitis B transmission;
- Promotion of vaccines across the life span, including during pregnancy, early childhood, and adolescence; and
- Routine examination of jurisdiction-specific pediatric vaccination coverage data to identify disparate populations or geographic areas.

State Title V/MCH programs are finalizing their five-year needs assessments and developing action plans to address state-specific needs and priorities. This is a perfect time to establish collaborations with state immunization programs or strengthen existing partnerships.

Both CDC and HRSA fully support state-level collaboration between state immunization and Title V/MCH programs. We appreciate your ongoing commitment to improving the health of America's mothers, children, and families.

**For More Information:**

HRSA/Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- [MCH Block Grant/Title V Information System](#)
- [Find your State Title V/MCH Director](#)
- [Bright Futures](#)
- [Women's Preventive Services Initiative](#)

CDC/Immunization Services Division

- [Vaccines for Children program](#)
- [Immunization program managers](#)
- [Resources for Encouraging Vaccinations During COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Routine Vaccination During the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
- [Vaccination Guidance During a Pandemic](#)