



Executive Director Update: 16-Year-Old Immunization Platform

Over the July 4th holiday, our Maryland highways were dotted with this safety message: **“Baseball, apple pie, fireworks and a sober ride.”** It reminded me of celebrating the July 4th holiday as a child, and how much I enjoyed the family gatherings with softball games, cookouts, pie and of course dazzling fireworks. It also reminded me not to drink and drive. It worked! I have learned to associate these special occasions with the need to ensure a sober ride.

I see the newly-carved 16-year-old immunization platform as the beginning of this same type of association. Can you imagine the messaging? I remember getting my driver’s license, going to prom, and taking the SAT. Could we throw vaccination into that mix? I’ve noticed that my teenagers have become more aware of their health. They don’t want too much discussion about vaccines, but they want to be protected. They know a little about meningitis and cancer, and they don’t want to be at risk. For my kids, it’s “skip the conversation, just give me the shot.” It’s a part of their routine. **If we can make vaccination an integral part of every teen’s routine as they grow more independent, the benefits can last a lifetime.**

The 16-year-old platform is a critical touch point to ensure that adolescents are up-to-date on vaccines, and also provides an opportunity for the healthcare provider to teach teens how to care for themselves, recognize risk and danger signs, and act independently to preserve their health. The platform is an opportunity to remind providers, parents, and teens about the importance of vaccination. Let’s embrace this opportunity to associate a great public health behavior with the rite of passage to independence!

Resources for the 16-Year-Old Platform:

- ~AIM Press Release: [AIM commends establishment of 16-year-old Immunization Platform](#)
- ~Adolescent Immunization Initiative Issue Brief: [Rationale for an immunization platform at 16 years of age](#)
- ~National Foundation for Infectious Diseases Call to Action: [Addressing new and ongoing adolescent vaccination challenges](#)
- ~Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine Position Statement: [Establishing an immunization platform for 16-year-olds in the United States](#)
- ~Pursuit of the Three C’s- Confident, Concise, and Consistent Healthcare Provider Recommendations for Adolescent Vaccines: [Tools to help providers recommend vaccines for adolescents](#)
- ~Mott Poll Report: [Parents Not Keeping up with Teen Vaccines: Information on awareness about adolescent vaccines](#)
- ~AAPF Adolescent Resource Library: [Resources to help educate teen patients and their parent/guardians](#)