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Observations on Adolescent Immunization



This information is based on feedback from a focus group consisting of seven Immunization Program Managers. The group discussed opportunities and challenges in promoting adolescent vaccination, especially a 16-year-old platform, and the critical role for Immunization Programs. Additional information about the focus group is available in an issue brief published in the Journal of Public Health Management and Practice:

https://aim.site-ym.com/resource/collection/89656EA4-3D74-4555-9458-87BA784AD961/Clark_et_al_JPHMP.pdf



Immunization Programs Supporting Providers

Potential Strategies for Improvement:

ADOLESCENT WELL VISIT

- ✦ Consider sending notices about school immunization requirements in early spring or throughout the year instead of the end of the school year. Sending adolescent reminder/recall notices throughout the year may increase awareness about the 16-year-old platform.

Potential Strategies for Improvement:

IMMUNIZATIONS AND NON-TRADITIONAL PROVIDERS

- ✦ Share materials with provider organizations for inclusion in their newsletters to educate providers about adolescent immunization and the new 16-year-old platform.
- ✦ Work with internal partners in dental health and STD prevention to expand the reach of adolescent immunization promotion beyond primary care providers.



Immunization Programs Tracking Adolescent Vaccination Rates

Potential Strategy for Improvement:

STATE-LEVEL ADOLESCENT IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

- ✦ Encourage CDC partners to expand NIS-Teen to measure MCV booster dose coverage at age 16 on a state by state basis.
- ✦ Share local coverage rate estimates to encourage reporting of adolescent data and heighten visibility of adolescent immunization, including the 16-year-old platform.



Immunization Programs Educating the Public

Potential Strategy for Improvement:

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS FOR OLDER TEENS

- ✦ Develop information packets to address transition to early adulthood; emphasize adolescent responsibility for their own health care and the importance of receiving immunizations while still covered by VFC or parents' insurance.
- ✦ Keep the audience in mind when creating information packets by using content and images relevant to older teens, eg, sports physicals, or driver licensing.

Potential Strategy for Improvement:

LIMITED BUDGETS

- ✦ Use digital advertisements at high school sporting events to promote immunization in this demographic.
- ✦ Create educational slide deck presentations on immunizations and on STDs for health education teachers to use in their classrooms.
- ✦ Encourage and work with national partners to produce adolescent immunization campaigns.



Immunization Programs Addressing School Requirements

Potential Strategy for Improvement:

EDUCATING PARENTS

- ✦ List all vaccines recommended for adolescents, not just those required for school, in communication to parents about school requirements.
- ✦ Have reminder/recall notices refer parents to providers or public health departments to identify needed vaccines, rather than listing specific vaccines.

1. Robinson CL, Romero JR, Kempe A, Pellegrini C; Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) Child/Adolescent Immunization Work Group. Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices Recommended Immunization Schedule for Children and Adolescents Aged 18 Years or Younger – United States, 2017. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep. 2017;66(5):134–135. Available at: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6605e1.htm.