Routine Pediatric Vaccination during the COVID-19 Pandemic, U.S.

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Disclaimer

The findings and conclusions in this presentation are those of the presenter and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
Weekly changes in Vaccines for Children (VFC) program provider orders for pediatric vaccines – United States, January 6-April 19, 2020

Santoli JM et al, MMWR (May 8, 2020); CDC’s Vaccine Tracking System (VTrckS)
VFC provider orders have rebounded...

Comparison of FY19 Weekly Provider Orders to FY20 and FY21 - All Non-Flu Vaccines

Notable Dates:
1. 1/20/2020: First US case reported (Washington state)
2. 3/13/2020: US national emergency declared

CDC’s Vaccine Tracking System (VTrckS)
...but there still is a substantial deficit for 2020-2021

As of March 1, overall VFC provider orders (other than flu) are down by \(~10.5M\) doses and MMR/MMRV down by \(~1.5M\) doses

CDC’s Vaccine Tracking System (VTrckS)
Current status of pediatric vaccination recovery

- Cumulative VFC vaccine doses (VTrckS) comparing FY19 to Oct 2019-Mar 2021
  - Total non-flu: 14% lower
  - Measles-containing: 21% lower
  - HPV: 21% lower
  - Tdap: 21% lower
  - MCV4: 17% lower
  - Hep A: 19% lower
  - Hep B: 16% lower
  - Dtap: 10% lower
  - Rotavirus: 6% lower

- VTrckS data show general indication that the recovery is heading in the right direction, though there is much catch-up vaccination needed.
A May 2020 survey about pediatric immunization services

- A survey of 1,933 practices participating in the Vaccines for Children program
  - 1,727 (89.8%) reported currently being open
    - 1,397 (81.1%) offered immunization services to all pediatric patients
    - Prioritization of younger children
  - 1,135 (59.1%) were likely able to provide immunization services to new pediatric patients if necessary

Possible barriers impacting full recovery of childhood vaccination

- **Inadequate communications/outreach to parents**
  - Reminder/recall about vaccines and well child visits
  - Communications about vaccine & well child schedules, VFC and Medicaid eligibility and enrollment procedures, COVID-19 precautions & actual risks in provider offices

- **Parent-originating barriers**
  - Fear of catching COVID-19
  - Financial concerns/loss of Medical insurance
  - Practical barriers like taking time off work/securing childcare

- **Reduced access to vaccination services**
  - HCP offices (including LHDs) closed/reduced appointments/not offering vaccine/not accepting Medicaid

- **Possibly inadequate enforcement of school entry requirements due to virtual school or COVID-19-related disruptions**
February – March 2021 Follow-up VFC provider survey

- Follow-up survey among VFC providers to understand continuing impact of the pandemic and to assess activities to increase demand for vaccines

- Questions included
  - Provider office operational status
  - Offering of immunization services
    - Walk-in vaccination visits
    - Expanded hours for vaccination visits
    - Special vaccination clinics
  - Communication with parents (including methods)
    - Importance of well-child visits
    - Reminders about well-child visits/vaccines due or overdue
    - Measures in place to limit risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2
  - Capacity to serve additional patients

- Associations of activities to increase demand on provider-level vaccine ordering
Call to Action: Urgent Need for Catch Up Vaccination (1)

- **Healthcare systems and healthcare providers can:**
  - Identify families whose children have missed doses and contact them to schedule appointments
  - Prompt clinicians when these children are seen to deliver vaccines that are due or overdue
  - Let families know what precautions are in place for safe delivery of in-person services

- **Healthcare provider organizations can:**
  - Encourage members to identify and follow up with families whose children have missed doses to get appointments scheduled
Call to Action: Urgent Need for Catch Up Vaccination (2)

- **State government agencies can:**
  - Send reminders to families about school immunization requirements
  - Implement follow-up for children who are not in compliance with requirements to encourage compliance
  - Use the state’s immunization information system’s reminder-recall capacity to notify families whose children have fallen behind on vaccines

- **We all can:**
  - Communicate directly to families the importance of well-child visits and getting caught up on any recommended vaccines that were missed
Resources for communicating with parents about routine vaccination during the COVID-19 pandemic

CDC resources for parents and immunization partners

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/routine
www.cdc.gov/vaccines/partners/childhood/stayingontrack.html

AAP’s #CallYourPediatrician campaign