

Study Shows Provider Recommendation Doubles Likelihood of Children Receiving Influenza Vaccination

New research published in *Vaccine*¹ by authors affiliated with CDC shows that children who received a provider recommendation for influenza vaccination were twice as likely to be vaccinated as those that did not.

Nationally, about 70% of children had received a provider recommendation. Children up to age twelve were more likely to have received it than teens. Additionally, children living in households with higher income (>\$75,000) were more likely to receive a recommendation than children living below poverty.

Here at the Immunization Program, we've been working to develop a strategy to increase influenza vaccination rates across the population using practices applied in both clinical and community settings. Flu vaccination coverage for children in Vermont is similar to that of the overall US population, but well below coverage for the New England region. Coverage among Vermont children 6 months to 17 years is 60%, about 10 percentage points below New England's coverage for the same age range.

Suggestions for Implementation

For your patients, providing your recommendation to children in the office during flu season is a straightforward way to promote vaccination. It can be harder to reach those that don't have a scheduled visit. Here are some options to consider:

- As children come in for physicals before the school year starts, recommend that they plan to get a flu shot when it becomes available
- If your office does advance scheduling for flu shot visits or clinics, recommend that parents make an appointment before leaving the office, so they can choose time that's convenient for their family
- If flu shot clinics will be offered, provide parents with a hard copy of the schedule
- In the early fall, consider mailing postcards recommending the flu shot to all patients
- Later in the season, mail postcards to those that remain unvaccinated (let us know if we can help with running an IMR report of unvaccinated patients)

¹ Find the complete article here: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29764679>