

Vermont Immunization Bulletin

October 2019



Introducing Abby Parker

Abby will be the new Regional Immunization Specialist for the Barre, Middlebury, Rutland, and Bennington Districts. She recently graduated from UVM with her Master's in Public Administration and a Graduate Certificate in Public Health. Abby was born and raised in Holliston, MA, near the start of the Boston Marathon. In her free time, Abby runs Bolton Valley's free ride snowboard program, watches Law & Order reruns with her cat, Olive, and enjoys cheering on the New England Patriots in their quest for (hopefully endless) Super Bowl victories. Welcome Abby!

VFC and VFA Compliance Visits

Abby and the rest of the Regional Immunization Specialists are actively scheduling VFC and VFA Compliance visits, trying to get out before the snow hits.

- If you are unsure of who your Regional Specialist is, please refer to our map: https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/ID_IZ_INFOHCP_VFCVFA_REGIONAL.MAP_.pdf.
- It is required that both the Primary and Back-up Immunization contacts be trained annually. A new job aid has been developed to help fulfill this requirement through the CDC You Call the Shots Web-Based Training Courses: https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/ID_IZ_INFOHCP_S%26H_YCTS%20instructions.pdf

Vaccine Brand Choice Implementation

Annually during July, VFC/VFA enrolled practices can complete a short survey if they choose to change vaccine brands from those they're currently receiving. Changes go into effect on October 1st, the beginning of the new Federal Fiscal Year. All VIMS Order Catalogs have been updated to reflect the results of the FFY 2020 Brand Choice Survey.

Immunization Quality Improvement (IQI) replaces AFIX

Now underway, IQI is an updated quality improvement effort offered to provider practices in order to support on-time vaccination for all children and teens. At a one-hour site visit, your local Immunization Designee, a public health nurse, will share the practice's coverage rates for each CDC recommended vaccine and work with staff to strengthen to practice's office-based plan for vaccination. Immunization resources and individualized training are provided to all participating practices. Please call your Local Health Office if your practice is interested in participating in an IQI visits. Find contact info here: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/local>.

VFC & VFA Flu Vaccine ordering – new process effective immediately

For the remainder of the 2019-20 flu season, flu vaccine is available to order in VIMS! There will be no more automatic shipments. Flu vaccine can be included with a routinely scheduled order, or ordered independently. This will allow practices to manage their own supply based on need and storage availability, check order status, and track shipments.

Best Practice: Plan to place a flu order within 7 days of the submission of a VIMS Reconcile Request to avoid the necessity of having to perform a separate inventory count.

State Activities

Updated Immunization Coverage Estimates for Teens Released by CDC

National Immunization Survey-Teen data show that for Vermont teens 13-17 years, immunization coverage remained stable in 2018. Estimates for ≥ 1 Tdap, ≥ 1 MenACWY, ≥ 1 HPV vaccine, ≥ 2 MMR, and ≥ 2 VAR doses were similar to 2017 estimates. Immunization coverage for Tdap and MenACWY was relatively high, at 95.1% (+2.6) and 90.0% (+3.6), respectively. In 2018, 62.0% (+6.1) of Vermont teens were up to date on HPV. While this was higher than the US overall and comparable to levels in the New England region, Vermont did not repeat the increase in HPV coverage observed last year.

- Physicians make stronger HPV vaccination recommendations for older children AAP News (September 16, 2019) – “Primary care physicians are more likely to strongly recommend HPV vaccination for teenagers than younger children, despite expert recommendations, according to a new study.” <https://www.aappublications.org/news/2019/09/16/hpvrecommendation091619>

Thank you to Vermont's Sentinel Providers

Flu surveillance season has begun and will run through May 2020. We use multiple surveillance methods to monitor flu burden in Vermont, including institutional flu outbreak reports, virology data, pediatric-associated flu mortality, emergency visit data surveillance, and sentinel provider data. Sentinel providers participate in the ILINet Program to report to CDC weekly via an online portal the number of patients seen with influenza like illness by age group and the total number of patients seen in the week prior to reporting. These providers also send specimens to the state lab for surveillance which helps us determine the types of flu circulating and informs vaccine development in the future.

ILINet Sentinel Providers

Integrative Family Medicine-Montpelier	Saint Michaels College Student Health Services
Mt. Ascutney Hospital	Stowe Family Practice
Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital	The Health Center
Rainbow Pediatrics	UVM Student Health Center
Richmond Family Medicine	UVMCH Pediatric Primary Care
White River Family Practice	

For weekly flu updates, please visit: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/immunizations-infectious-disease/influenza/flu-activity-and-surveillance>

Schedules and Recommendations

Ask the Experts: When should we start administering flu vaccine? Now is the time!

"Optimally, vaccination should occur before onset of influenza activity in the community. Because the timing of the onset, peak and decline of influenza activity varies, the ideal time to start vaccinating cannot be predicted each season. Healthcare providers should offer vaccination by the end of October, if possible, and vaccination should continue to be offered as long as influenza viruses are circulating, and unexpired vaccine is available. To avoid missed opportunities for vaccination, providers should offer vaccination during routine healthcare visits and hospitalizations. Early vaccination of children younger than age 9 years who need 2 doses of vaccine can be helpful in assuring routine second doses are given before the influenza season begins."

Experts from CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases address this and many other questions about vaccines in Immunize.org's Ask the Experts forum:

<http://www.immunize.org/askexperts/> .

ACIP Meeting: October 23-24

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) holds three meetings each year at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia to review scientific data and vote on vaccine recommendations. The agenda for this month's meeting includes presentations on Pertussis and Influenza Vaccines. Meetings are open to the public and available online via live webcast.

- To view this month's agenda and find out how to watch and/or listen to the meeting via live-webcast, visit CDC's ACIP page: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/meetings/index.html>

Research and Resources

The 16-year old Vaccination Platform

In the 2017 schedule, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) instituted a change by carving out an immunization visit specifically for adolescents 16 years of age to highlight the need for improving immunization rates across a number of older adolescent immunizations. "This visit enables providers to address multiple healthcare needs for the patient, with an age-appropriate emphasis on behavioral health needs. By emphasizing the 16-year-old visit, providers have the opportunity to address other preventive strategies while also administering a high yield preventive strategy in the form of vaccines." Amy Middleman, MD, MPH, MEd, SAHM's liaison to the ACIP.

- "Dear Colleague" Call-to-action Letter (8/1/2019) Stresses Importance of Implementing Immunization Visit at 16 Years of Age <https://www.immunize.org/letter/16-year-old-platform.pdf>
- "You're 16...We Recommend These Vaccines for You" (10/19) handout by the Immunization Action Coalition <https://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4022.pdf>

Repurposing Foam Coolers

Vermont Solid Waste facilities do not currently accept Styrofoam and mail-in recycling options are cumbersome and cost prohibitive so how can we divert some vaccine shipping coolers away from the landfill? Here are several ideas for the DIY types from the Crafting for a Green World blog:

<https://craftingagreenworld.com/articles/ways-to-reuse-styrofoam-coolers/>

