

Pennsylvania Rolls Out New Program to Boost Adolescent Vaccination

As most healthcare providers know, adolescent vaccination rates are low across the country, which means that millions of teens are potentially vulnerable to serious infectious diseases. So how does Pennsylvania compare? Let's take a peek at the latest data.

Healthcare providers are aware that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends teens receive four vaccines: quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY); human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine; tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (Tdap) vaccine; and influenza (flu) vaccine.¹ Despite these recommendations, Pennsylvania adolescents remain under-vaccinated against dangerous diseases.^{2,3} According to the CDC, in Pennsylvania in 2015:

- Only 48% of adolescent girls and 38% of adolescent boys completed the HPV vaccine series²
- While 95% of adolescents received at least one of the two CDC-recommended doses of MenACWY to help protect against meningococcal disease, there is still room for improvement – especially when it comes to the recommended second dose.² Nationally, only 33% of adolescents received the recommended second dose of MenACWY by 17 years of age.^{2*}
- Only 49% of adolescents 13 through 17 years of age were vaccinated against the flu³

Strides are being made to address these low statistics. For instance, in 2017, the CDC and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) updated the Childhood and Adolescent Immunization Schedule to feature a specific 16-year-old immunization platform visit.¹ In Pennsylvania specifically, in 2016 the Pennsylvania Department of Health began requiring that students entering the 7th and 12th grades get the MenACWY vaccine.⁴

These are steps in the right direction but more can be done. This is why the PAFP applied for, and was awarded a grant to bring a new program called *Highlight on VACCINATIONS 4 TEENS* to members. As part of the program, a physician champion will offer a critical presentation on the importance of adolescent vaccination on Saturday, November 18 at the Doubletree in Reading for attendees at PAFP's CME conference held in conjunction with the Reading Health System that weekend.

In the meantime you can take action right now to help improve teen vaccination rates by checking out the resources available at www.aafpfoundation.org/vaccinations4teens. *Highlight on VACCINATIONS 4 TEENS* provides tools to help family physicians communicate the benefits of vaccinations to their teen patients and parents/guardians. These materials include videos; reminder emails, letters, text messages and postcards; website and social media posts; in-office vaccination reminder posters; and personal testimonials from individuals impacted by vaccine-preventable diseases.

If you're interested in attending the event, please contact Janine Owen at JOWEN@PAFP.COM. You can learn more about *Highlight on VACCINATIONS 4 TEENS* and access the materials here: www.aafpfoundation.org/vaccinations4teens.

References:

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3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015, September 29). Influenza Vaccination Coverage Estimates for Persons 6 Months and Older by State, HHS Region, and the United States, National Immunization Survey-Flu (NIS-Flu) and Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 2015-16 Influenza Season. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/fluview/reportshtml/report1516/reportii/index.html>.
4. Pennsylvania Department of Health. School Vaccination Requirements for Attendance in Pennsylvania Schools. Retrieved from: <http://www.health.pa.gov/My%20Health/Immunizations/Documents/SIR8.pdf>.

**The rate of adolescents in Pennsylvania receiving the second dose of MenACWY by 17 years of age is not available.*