



Dear Health System Partner,

The United States faces a significant vaccination gap for school-age children, especially adolescents, due to the pandemic. As of February 2021, **public childhood vaccine doses are down over 11 million doses** for non-influenza vaccinations. Vaccine rates for younger children are down 5-10%, but public sector doses for adolescents are down 17-21% according to the CDC. Considering that preteens ages 9-12 are due for four vaccines,

it is crucial that we continue to provide protection against all vaccine-preventable diseases.

Along with the [CDC](#), we are calling upon our health system partners to **take swift and decisive action to bring in school-age children between March and May of 2021 to catch up on missed vaccinations and provide newly due vaccines.**

The urgency for action is also propelled by an emerging challenge. Should the COVID-19 vaccines be approved for children as young as 12 years old, as anticipated this summer, we face the possibility of a 6-8-week vaccination blackout period during the usual back-to-school vaccination season. Why? Current [CDC guidance](#) on provision of COVID-19 vaccines to ages 16 and older notes that no other vaccines should be provided two weeks before, during, or after the series.

**Please join us in activating your health system, patients, and the public to schedule their adolescent well-child visits between now and the end of May for an [Early Safe Return to School Immunization Initiative](#).**

Actions You Can Take:

**1) Communicate Proactively to Families**

- Tell families about [office safety measures](#)
- Promote availability of appointments
- Activate multiple channels to [communicate](#) with parents including calls, texts, emails, and patient portals

**2) Activate Reminder/Recall Efforts**

- Review current adolescent rates by site and provider
- Pull overdue and newly due patient lists
- Send [letters/emails](#) inviting patients in for [annual well-child visits and immunizations](#)
- Call patients to schedule well-child and immunization visits

**3) Miss No Opportunity to Vaccinate**

- Educate all care team members on the growing vaccination gap
- Use standing orders to increase immunization capacity
- Recommend all [ACIP- recommended vaccines](#) at every visit
- Consider recommending HPV vaccination [starting at age 9](#)
- Expand hours and locations for well-child and immunization-only visits

You are a trusted source of care to your patients. Resources to support your efforts: [health system call to action](#), [sample messaging for parents](#), [social media shareables](#), [parent facing materials](#). Additionally, the National HPV Vaccination Roundtable has resources available [here](#).

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