



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Robert R. Neall, Secretary

June 5, 2020

Dear Colleague:

We are writing to alert you to concerning recent trends in pediatric vaccination administration and urge you to do everything you can to ensure that children get the recommended vaccinations on schedule. Please contact those families in your practice whose children have missed a vaccination and strongly encourage them to bring their children's vaccinations up to date.

On May 8, 2020, the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention published a Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Review article entitled "Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Routine Vaccine Ordering and Administration – United States, 2020". In this article, the CDC described the vaccine orders from the Vaccines for Children Program and vaccine doses administered as reported to the Vaccine Safety Datalink during the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic. The data analyzed in the report shows a significant and concerning nationwide decrease in both vaccine orders and vaccinations in April 2020 compared to April 2019.¹

In Maryland, ImmuNet data shows that during April 2020, there was a 56% decrease in childhood immunization administration, a decrease of 36% for infants 0-1 years of age, and an 83% decrease for children 2-18 years of age compared to April 2019. Of particular concern is the 71% decrease in administration of MMR vaccine which, as you know, creates the potential for a measles outbreak in Maryland. There was also a 68% decrease in Varicella vaccine administration. The vaccine administration data for May (2019 vs 2020) demonstrate a slight improvement in the number of vaccine administrations although there is still much room for improvement. Vaccinations of children 0-24 months continued to progress. MMR (57% decrease in May) and Varicella (54% decrease in May) vaccinations still have a larger decrease compared to the other routine childhood vaccinations.

Both the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend continuation of essential services, including immunizations, during the COVID-19 pandemic

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/pediatric-hcp.html>

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/covid-19-clinical-guidance-q-a/>

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) recommends you communicate with your patients' families regarding the need to receive all recommended vaccinations so children do

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6920e1.htm?s_cid=mm6920e1_w

not fall further behind and they can be caught up on any missed vaccinations. MDH also recommends the use of reminder recall systems, either through your own electronic health record (EHR) or through the MDH Immunization Information System (ImmuNet). The ImmuNet reminder recall users guide and video are available at <https://www.mdimmunet.org/prd-IR/portalInfoManager.do#>. Also, families may visit MD.MyIR.net to view and print their child's vaccination record.

Additional resources for your practice include:

CDC guidance called "Get Your Clinic Ready for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)" <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinic-preparedness.html>.

American Academy of Pediatrics Digital Toolbox for the [#CallYourPediatrician](https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/campaigns/call-your-pediatrician/Pages/default.aspx) Campaign <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/campaigns/call-your-pediatrician/Pages/default.aspx>

In summary, to prevent outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases, it is important that you work with your patients and their families as soon as possible to be sure children are caught up on their vaccinations.

Sincerely,



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