

Sender: Transformation Center

Audience: CCOs

June 12, 2020

Main Message: Oregon vaccinations have dropped dramatically since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Children who are missing shots are at risk of vaccine preventable diseases right now and will be at risk of exclusion from school and daycare at the school exclusion deadline in February 2021. It is critical for clinics to work with families on getting children caught up with recommended vaccines. This will serve to protect children from vaccine preventable diseases and prevent overwhelming the local public health clinics with immunizing school age children in the period just before the school exclusion deadline. CCOs play an important role in communicating with vaccinating health care providers about the immediate action needed and the resources available to help get their patient population caught up with the recommended vaccines as soon as possible.

Background:

- We know from ALERT IIS data that the number of childhood immunizations given in March/April decreased dramatically compared with last year. The number has picked up some in May, and the increase varies by age (the youngest children are getting more vaccines) and provider (some providers have started giving many vaccines again, while others have not).
- Hundreds of thousands of Oregonians have become jobless because of the coronavirus crisis. Many who have lost insurance have enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan. But whether they have enrolled in OHP or have remained uninsured, people under 19 years of age, are eligible for vaccines at no cost through the [Vaccines for Children Program](#).
- We anticipate more children will be behind on vaccines, fewer walk-in immunization options at clinics, an increased workload on local public health due to COVID-19.
- We anticipate that school requirements for immunizations will remain in place for the 2020-21 school year. We are making back up plans should something change, but for now we are committed to providing support to maintain effective public health practices while strengthening our support to our partners. Prevention of vaccine-preventable diseases depends on well-vaccinated schools and childcare facilities.
- In March at the beginning of the COVID-19 closures, ALERT IIS suspended practice of sending monthly statewide Reminder/Recall letters for 22-

month-olds behind in their immunizations. The Reminder/Recall letters will resume in July.

Public access to immunization services is limited in different areas around the State, including the metro area. Children and families paneled to non-immunizing primary care clinics may need extra assistance in accessing immunizations.

Goal: Provide early notification to families behind on immunizations, (especially newly uninsured families and families new to the Oregon Health Plan), **and give clear guidance on where to get vaccines** to:

- Spread out the impact on public health clinics operating at lower capacity with more demand,
- Minimize the number of individuals who are unprotected from vaccine preventable diseases,
- Reduce the number of children who do not meet the minimum vaccine requirements for attending school.

How to achieve goal:

CCOs can help achieve these goals through these actions:

1. Communicate with immunizing health care providers and encourage them to:
 - a. Run the ALERT IIS Reminder/Recall to generate a list of patients who are behind on any immunization at any age. [Instructions](#) for running the report are on the Oregon Immunization Program website.
 - b. Generate customizable letters from the ALERT IIS Reminder/Recall report to send to families with children are behind on or missing immunizations. [Instructions](#) are included in the document mentioned in point a.
 - c. Contact the ALERT IIS Help Desk at alertiis@state.or.us or 1-800-980-9431 for technical assistance.
 - d. Give extra assistance to families paneled to non-immunizing primary care clinics.
 - e. Put extra emphasis on communicating with families about the importance of getting the entire family vaccinated for influenza, as a strategy to reduce the burden on health care systems in preparation for a possible COVID-19 surge this fall.
2. Relax barriers to vaccine access by:
 - a. Waiving in-network treatment requirements and other costs of out-of-network care to encourage patients to seek preventive care.

- b. Work with members to identify and address barriers to patients accessing care such as transportation issues or lack of local provider capacity.
- 3. Communicate with families the following messages:
 - a. Their children are eligible for VFC vaccine: Newly jobless families that have lost insurance can access vaccines for their children age 18 and younger at no cost through the [Vaccines for Children Program](#) whether or not they have enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan.
 - b. There are many benefits from flu vaccination and preventing flu is always important, but in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's even more important to do everything possible to reduce illnesses and preserve scarce health care resources.