Each year, tens of thousands of adults in the United States contract diseases that cause suffering, hospitalization or even death. Vaccines can prevent much of the needless suffering, but vaccination rates among adults remain well below national recommendations.

Many patients are unaware of the risks associated with vaccine preventable diseases and report not receiving immunization recommendations from their health care professional.

- A recent survey of primary care physicians found only 29-32 percent of primary care physicians and general internists report assessing vaccination status at every visit (CDC, 2016).

- Adults aged 18-64 with medical conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and lung disease are at greater risk of contracting influenza and pneumonia and hence have a greater need for immunizations. **

- Influenza and Pneumonia are the 8th leading cause of death in the U.S. (CDC, 2016).

- Influenza and pneumonia are the fifth leading cause of death in the U.S. for those 65 and older.

- Almost 90 percent of all deaths from influenza occur in adults aged 65 and older. ***

Healthy People 2020 goals include reducing the incidence and prevalence of these diseases, which would also lead to a decrease in health care costs.

- Healthy People 2020 goal is to have 90 percent immunization rate for both influenza and pneumonia in patients 65 and older.****

- In 2008 the baseline percentages showed only 60 percent of adults 65 and older received a pneumococcal vaccine, and just 66.6 percent received and influenza vaccine.

All Health Care Professionals Should:

**ASSESS** immunization status of all patients at every visit.

**Strongly RECOMMEND** vaccines that patients need.

**ADMINISTER** needed vaccines or **REFER** to a provider who can immunize.

**DOCUMENT** vaccines received by your patients in the EHR and immunization registry.

* www.cdc.gov/brfss/index.html
** https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/adults/for-practice/highrisk-strat.html
*** https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5933a1.htm
**Improve Population Health**

Home health agencies are uniquely positioned to help break down immunization barriers for home-bound patients. By engaging and educating patients on how vaccines can help to manage their health condition, your clinicians can help improve immunization rates for your agency and for our communities.

**Improve Your Star Rating**

By focusing on quality improvement for immunizations, you can improve your agency’s star rating in Home Health Compare. (Link: [https://www.medicare.gov/homehealthcompare/search.html](https://www.medicare.gov/homehealthcompare/search.html))

- One important measure contributing to home health star ratings is whether your patients have received an influenza vaccination.
- Hospital admissions and other similar measures can be greatly improved by increasing the percentage patients who receive timely influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations.
Clinician Tools and Resources

This section contains tools and resources to assist in vaccine assessment and recommendation, vaccine guidelines, patient engagement, and billing.

2017 Recommended Immunizations for Adults: By Age and Health Condition

**Description:** Immunization recommendations by age and by health condition.
**Available at:** [http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/adult/adult-schedule-easy-read.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/adult/adult-schedule-easy-read.pdf)
**Source:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
**Intended audience:** For office use or may be given to patients.

Transporting Refrigerated Vaccines

**Description:** Safely transporting vaccines is a priority for home health agencies that immunize. This document provides guidelines for emergency and short-term transport and storage while in the field.
**Available at:** [http://www.eziz.org/assets/docs/IMM-983.pdf](http://www.eziz.org/assets/docs/IMM-983.pdf)
**Source:** California Department of Public Health, Immunizations Branch
**Intended audience:** For provider reference, also may be given to patients.

Checklist for Safe Vaccine Storage and Handling

**Description:** Guide to ensure vaccines are handled according to best practices and recommendations.
**Available at:** [http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p3035.pdf](http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p3035.pdf)
**Source:** Immunization Action Coalition (IAC)
**Intended audience:** For medical staff use.

Influenza Vaccination for Adults - Fact Sheet for Clinicians

**Description:** Information to assist in preparation for the upcoming flu season.
**Available at:** [http://www.learning4quality.org](http://www.learning4quality.org)
**Source:** New England QIN-QIO
**Intended audience:** For medical staff use.
CMS Immunizations Billing

Description: Comprehensive guide for billing immunizations to Medicare Part B that includes directions, codes, FAQs and links to help office staff successfully bill for vaccinations administered.


Source: The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)

Intended audience: For clinicians and staff.

Vaccine Prescription Pad

Description: Contains a list of vaccines recommended for adults 19 years and older for easy referral to a pharmacy or immunization clinic.

Available at: https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/adults/downloads/vaccine-rx-pad.pdf

Source: CDC

Intended audience: For clinicians to fill out and give to patients who did not receive a recommended vaccine.

Motivate Adult Patients to Get Vaccinated (Talking Points for Clinicians)

Description: Guide to encourage patients to get vaccinated, includes behavior change techniques.

Available at: http://healthinsight.org/tools-and-resources/send/114-tools/589-motivate-patients-to-get-vaccinated

Source: HealthInsight

Intended audience: For clinicians and staff.

Quick Guide to Adult Vaccine Messaging

Description: Discusses motivations and barriers for adults needing vaccinations, and provides links for additional information specific to conditions that increase risk of influenza morbidity.

Available at: https://www.izsummitpartners.org/content/uploads/2014/05/AdultVaccineMessaging2.pdf

Source: National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit

Intended audience: For clinicians and staff.
10 Common Flu Myths

**Description:** Quick reference to common misconceptions and accompanying facts.
**Available at:** [https://healthinsight.org/tools-and-resources/download/258-resources-for-all-settings-begin-here/1019-10-common-flu-myths](https://healthinsight.org/tools-and-resources/download/258-resources-for-all-settings-begin-here/1019-10-common-flu-myths)
**Source:** HealthInsight
**Intended audience:** For clinicians, staff or patients.

Pneumococcal and Zoster Pocket Guides

**Description:** Comprehensive guides on the administration, indications and talking points about pneumococcal and zoster vaccines. You can order laminated copies of both pocket guides for free.
**Available at:** [http://www.immunize.org/pocketguides/](http://www.immunize.org/pocketguides/)
**Source:** IAC
**Intended audience:** For clinicians and staff.

Vaccine Reminder/Recall System Resources

**Description:** Studies show that vaccine reminder/recall systems can help improve immunization rates. Here are some study results and a few resources to help your practice get started.
**Available at:** [https://healthinsight.org/tools-and-resources/download/259-clinicians/1018-vaccine-reminder-recall-system-resources](https://healthinsight.org/tools-and-resources/download/259-clinicians/1018-vaccine-reminder-recall-system-resources)
**Source:** HealthInsight
**Intended audience:** For clinicians and staff.

Standards of Immunizations Information Card

**Description:** Brief description of the CDC immunization standards: Assess, Recommend, Administer and Document
**Available at:** [https://healthinsight.org/tools-and-resources/download/259-clinicians/1044-immunizations-standards-information-card](https://healthinsight.org/tools-and-resources/download/259-clinicians/1044-immunizations-standards-information-card)
**Source:** HealthInsight, adapted from the CDC
**Intended audience:** For clinicians.
**Clinician Tools and Resources**

**Pneumococcal Vaccine Timing for Adults**

**Description:** Detailed schedule for pneumococcal vaccines by age and health condition.


**Source:** New England QIN-QIO, adapted from the California Department of Public Health

**Intended audience:** For provider reference, also may be given to patients.

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**OASIS Guidance Manual, Effective January 1, 2017**

**Description:** A link to the latest version of the OASIS guide for your agency.


**Source:** CMS

**Intended audience:** For clinicians and staff.

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**Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) Resources at HHQI**

**Description:** HHQI provides free resources for developing the required QAPI plan according to the Medicare’s new Conditions of Participation (CoP). Note that the final ruling dated January 2017 states a QAPI plan due date of June 2017. However, a proposed rule dated April 3, 2017 proposes an additional six months of time until January 13, 2018. Consider including immunizations as part of your QAPI plan, and the New England QIN-QIO can assist you with improving immunization rates.

**Available at:** [http://www.homehealthquality.org/Education/QAPI-Resources.aspx](http://www.homehealthquality.org/Education/QAPI-Resources.aspx)

**Source:** HHQI

**Intended audience:** For clinicians and staff.
Patient and Staff Education

This section contains educational materials for patients and staff to help answer questions and address vaccine myths and misinformation, empowering individuals to make informed decisions.

No More Excuses: You Need a Flu Vaccine

Description: Flu vaccination information for patients.
Available at: https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/general/no-excuses-flu-vaccine-print.pdf
Source: CDC
Intended audience: For patients who aren’t sure whether to get a flu vaccine.

Immunization Action Coalition Vaccine Handouts

Description: Immunization information.
Available at: http://www.immunize.org/handouts/
Source: IAC
Intended audience: For patients and staff.

Immunization Series for Adults: Multiple Topics

Description: A combination of fact sheets, web tools, videos, podcasts, Spanish-language resources and other information about vaccinations.
Available at: https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/resources.html
Source: CDC
Intended audience: For patients.

Vaccine Information Statements (VISs)

Description: information sheets produced by the CDC that explain both the benefits and risks of vaccine to vaccine recipients.
Available at: https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/index.html
Source: CDC
Intended audience: All patients.
Convincing evidence shows the use of Standing Orders in medical practices can improve immunization rates in the adult population. Here are some tools to help your organization develop a successful vaccine standing orders program.

10 Steps to Implementing Standing Orders for Immunization in Your Practice Setting

Description: Tools to help streamline vaccine related work-flow and delivery.
Available at: www.immunize.org/catg.d/p3067.pdf
Source: IAC
Intended audience: For clinicians and staff.

Standing Order Templates

Description: Standing orders templates for various vaccines.
Available at: www.immunize.org/standing-orders
Source: IAC
Intended audience: For clinicians and staff.

Standing Order Protocols

Description: Standing orders protocols from Take A Stand!™
Available at: www.standingorders.org
Source: IAC and Take A Stand!™
Intended audience: For clinicians and staff.

Model Standing Orders (MSOs)

Description: Example of Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services documents for standing orders.
Available at: http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/id/immunization/model-standing-orders.html
Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)
Intended audience: For clinicians and staff.
One of the best ways to close the vaccine communication loop among providers is to use your state’s immunizations information system (IIS) to assess patients’ vaccination status and to update documentation on vaccines administered.

**Connecticut**
Connecticut Immunization Registry & Tracking System (CIRTS)
Available at: [http://www.tahd.org/ct-immunization-registry--tracking-system.html](http://www.tahd.org/ct-immunization-registry--tracking-system.html)

**Maine**
Maine Immunization Information System/Registry

**Massachusetts**
Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS)

**New Hampshire**
New Hampshire DHHS Immunization Program
Available at: [https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/immunization/index.htm](https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/immunization/index.htm)

**Rhode Island**
Rhode Island does not currently have an adult immunization registry. It is in the development process. KIDSNET is the children’s immunizations registry. Available at: [http://health.ri.gov/programs/kidsnet/](http://health.ri.gov/programs/kidsnet/)

**Vermont**
Vermont Immunization Registry (IMR)
Available at: [http://www.healthvermont.gov/health-statistics-vital-records/registries/immunization](http://www.healthvermont.gov/health-statistics-vital-records/registries/immunization)
The New England QIN-QIO strongly encourages home care organizations to enroll and participate with national and local home care associations. These groups will connect you with your peers and provide education, expert advice, and business savings. They can also represent your interests in local legislative sessions and before Congress.

National and local home care associations provide support to help your organization with topics such as quality improvement, best practices, education and research, OASIS, billing, advocacy and legislative action. Work with these associations to stay current on hot topics and issues facing home health providers.

**National Associations**
- National Association for Home Care & Hospice: [http://www.nahc.org](http://www.nahc.org)
- American Association of Home Care: [https://www.aahomecare.org](https://www.aahomecare.org)

**Connecticut**
- Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home: [http://www.cthealthcareathome.org](http://www.cthealthcareathome.org)

**Maine**
- Home Care & Hospice Alliance of Maine: [http://homecarealliance.org](http://homecarealliance.org)

**Massachusetts**
- Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts: [http://www.thinkhomecare.org](http://www.thinkhomecare.org)

**New Hampshire**
- Home Care Association of New Hampshire: [http://www.homecarenh.org](http://www.homecarenh.org)

**Rhode Island**
- Rhode Island Partnership for Home Care: [http://www.riphc.org/](http://www.riphc.org/)

**Vermont**
- VNAs of Vermont: [http://vnavt.com](http://vnavt.com)
This section contains additional resources specifically for your state.

**Connecticut**

Department of Public Health:  

Connecticut Immunization Coalition:  

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**Maine**

Maine Immunization Coalition:  

Maine Immunization Program:  

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**Massachusetts**

Massachusetts Adult Immunization Coalition:  

Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services:  

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**New Hampshire**

New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services: Immunizations:  

North Country Health Consortium:  

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**Rhode Island**

Ocean State Immunization Collaborative:  

Rhode Island Department of Health:  
[http://www.health.state.ri.us/diseases/#vaccinepreventable](http://www.health.state.ri.us/diseases/#vaccinepreventable)

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**Vermont**

Vermont Department of Health: Immunizations:  
[www.healthvermont.gov/disease-control/immunization](http://www.healthvermont.gov/disease-control/immunization)

Vermont Department of Health: Vaccine Safety:  
Contact the New England QIN-QIO

New England
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rcooney@healthcentricadvisors.org
401-528-3226

Looking for more information
Visit our website at www.HealthCareForNewEngland.org to find more information on ways we can help you with immunizations and other quality improvement projects.