

## ADULT AND ADOLESCENT IMMUNIZATION

### WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

Each year, 46,000 to 48,000 adults die from vaccine-preventable diseases. Influenza vaccination levels remain low for adults. As of 2002, only 67% of adults aged 65 years or older and 29% of high-risk adults aged 18 to 64 years reported receiving influenza vaccination. Influenza vaccination coverage levels among persons aged 65 years or older were lower among African Americans (48%) and Hispanics (54%) compared to non-Hispanic whites (68%). The gap is even wider for pneumococcal vaccination. In 2000, hepatitis B coverage, recommended for all adolescents, was only 44% among 13 to 15 years old, based on parent-held vaccination records.

### WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

In 2001, the Department of Health and Human Services made eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in influenza and pneumococcal vaccination for people 65 years of age and older a priority. To address this priority, CDC established the Racial and Ethnic Adult Disparities in Immunization Initiative (READII) demonstration project in 5 sites (Chicago, Rochester [NY], San Antonio, Milwaukee, and 19 counties in the Mississippi Delta region). These sites are developing and implementing community-based plans by partnering with public health professionals, healthcare providers, and community organizations. CDC and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) also continue to collaborate to improve influenza and pneumococcal vaccination rates in nursing homes and hospitals.

CDC also makes available a number of tools for immunization programs:

- Published by CDC in 2002, the Adult Immunization Schedule is the first schedule ever approved by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices; it has also been accepted by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Academy of Family Physicians.
- In 2003, the *Standards for Adult Immunization Practices* (Standards) were revised based on previous efforts to improve adult immunization coverage and in response to changes in the healthcare delivery system. These revised standards focus on vaccine accessibility, effective communication of vaccination information, improving vaccination rates, and community partnership development.
- The Adult Clinic Assessment Software Application, created in 2002, is a tool that practitioners or clinic managers can use to estimate the vaccine coverage levels of the patients they serve and to help determine an appropriate course of action to improve coverage.
- A collaboration between CDC and the Association of Teachers of Preventive Medicine produced a “What Works” CD-ROM which individual practice and clinic staff can use to test their adult vaccination knowledge; reference a substantial amount of background material; review frequently asked questions and model practices; select strategies to increase vaccination rates; and create an action plan.

### WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

- Continue working with other federal agencies; state and local health departments; and private and community partners to
- Support state health departments to develop comprehensive plans for vaccination of adolescents and adults.
- Address and eliminate persistent racial and ethnic disparities in adult immunization coverage levels.
- Develop, evaluate, and promote standing orders and patient/provider reminder systems.
- Help improve physician and institutional practices that lead to increased vaccination coverage among adolescents and adults.

For additional information on this or other CDC programs, visit [www.cdc.gov/program](http://www.cdc.gov/program)

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