



# **Maintaining and Strengthening Childhood Vaccination During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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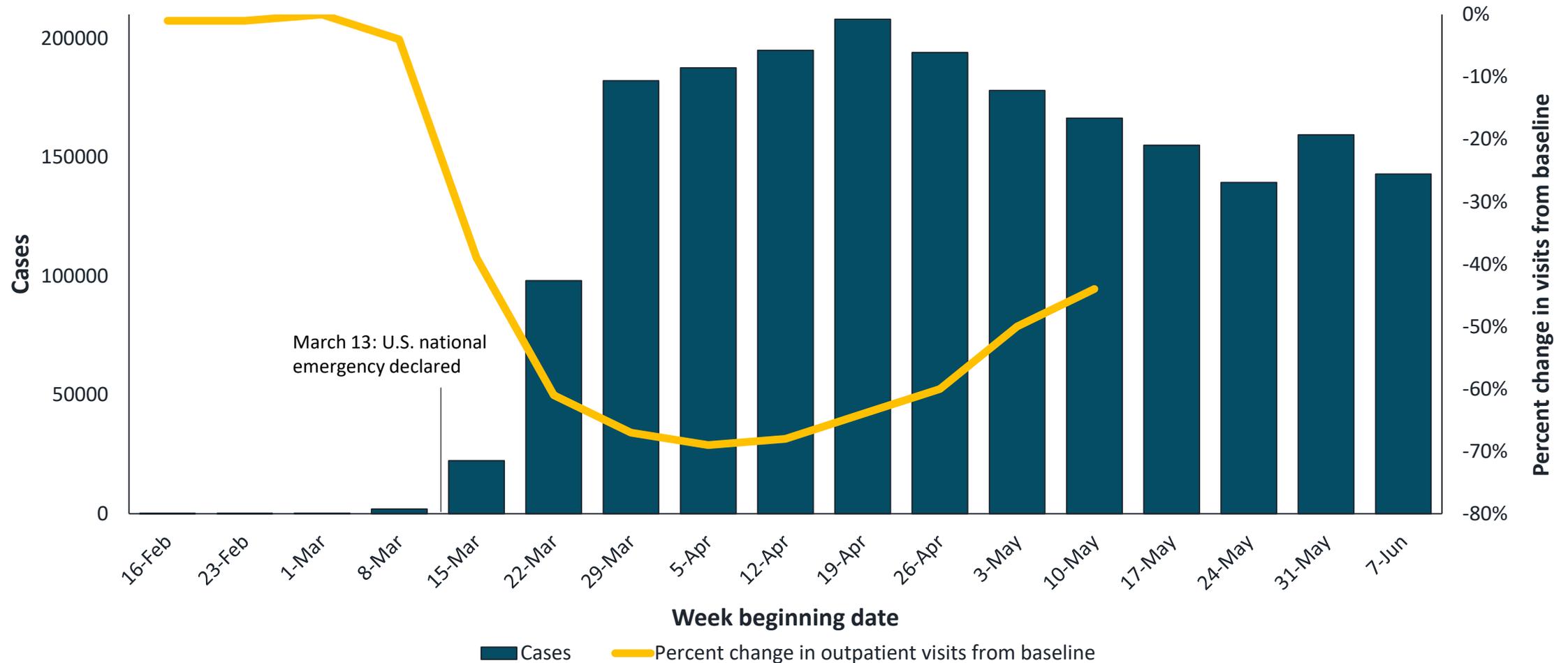
Director, Immunization Services Division

Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices

June 22, 2020

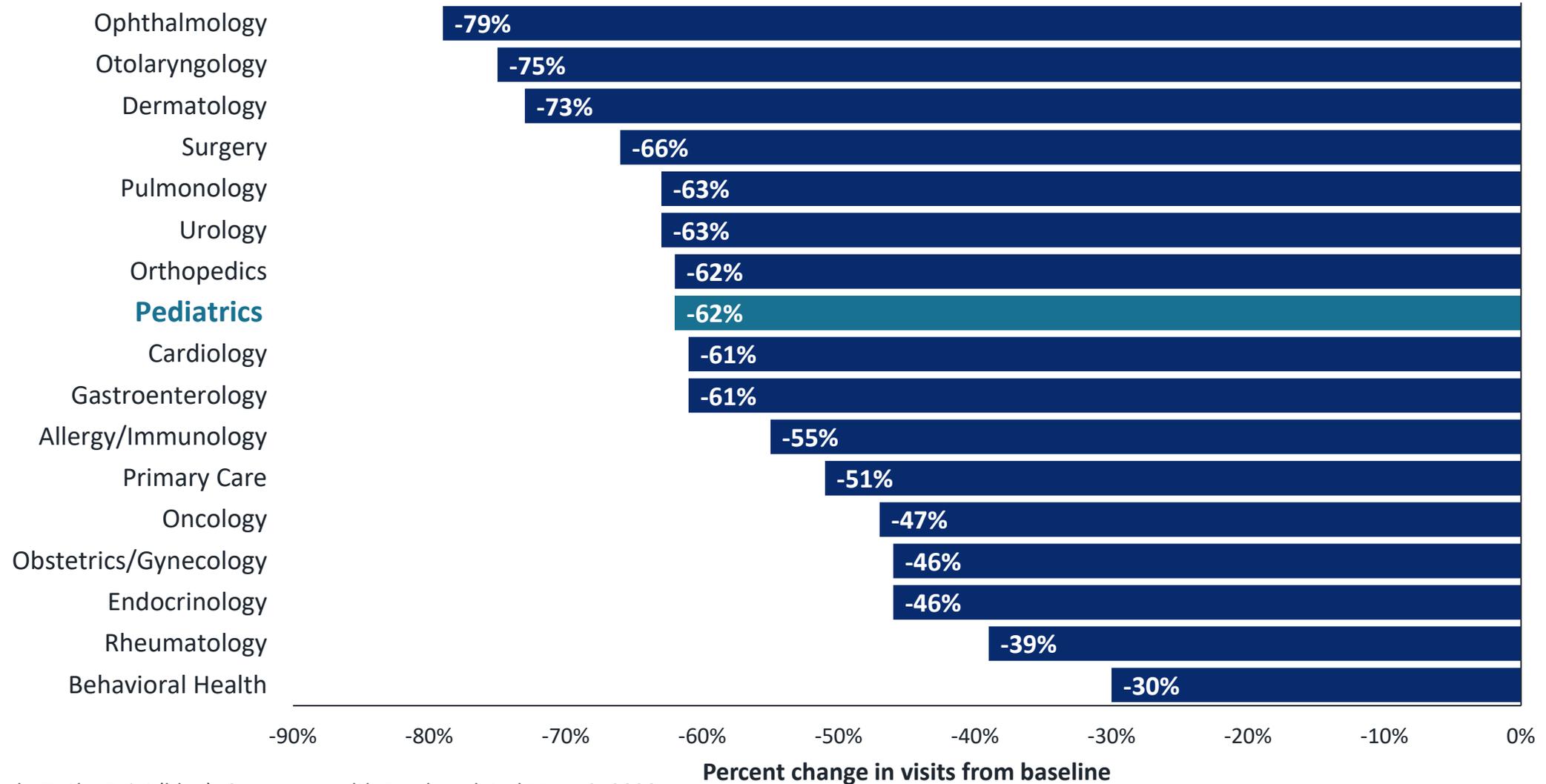
# Substantial disruptions to outpatient medical care during COVID-19 pandemic

As number of COVID-19 cases increased and stay-at-home orders implemented, nearly 70% reduction in outpatient visits before starting to rebound



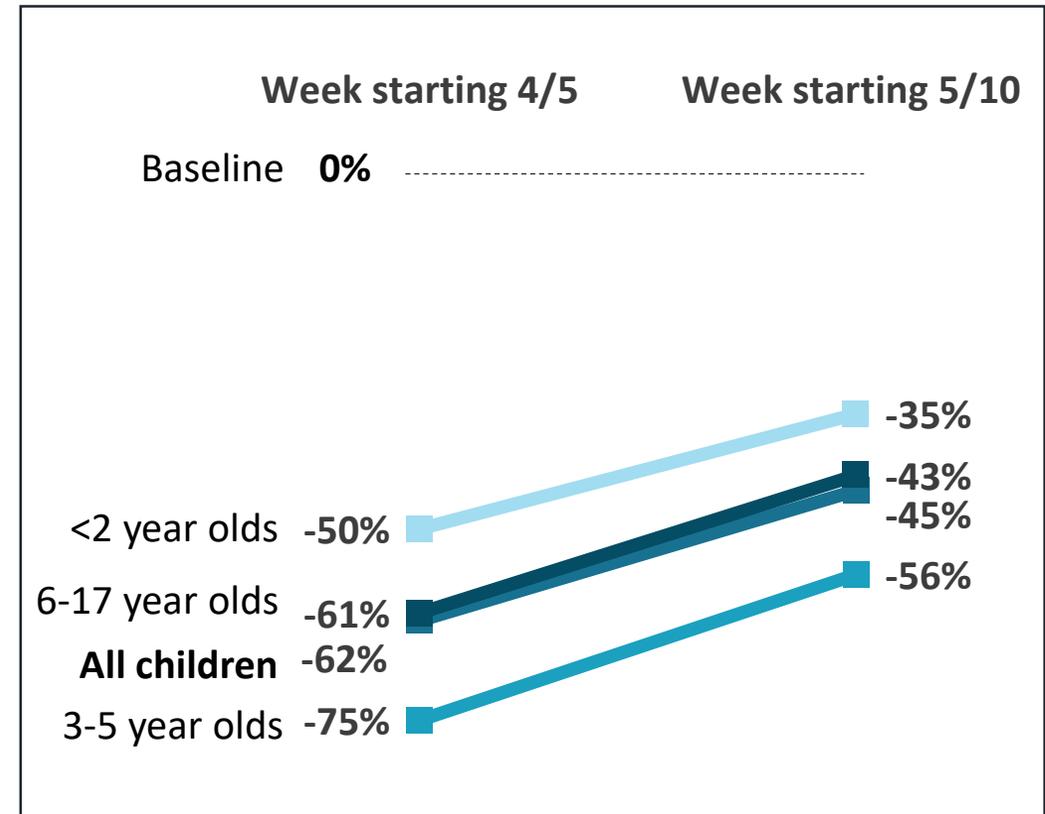
# Pediatrics among the hardest-hit specialties

62% reduction in pediatric outpatient visits by April 5th



# Increases in outpatient visits across all pediatric age groups in May compared to April

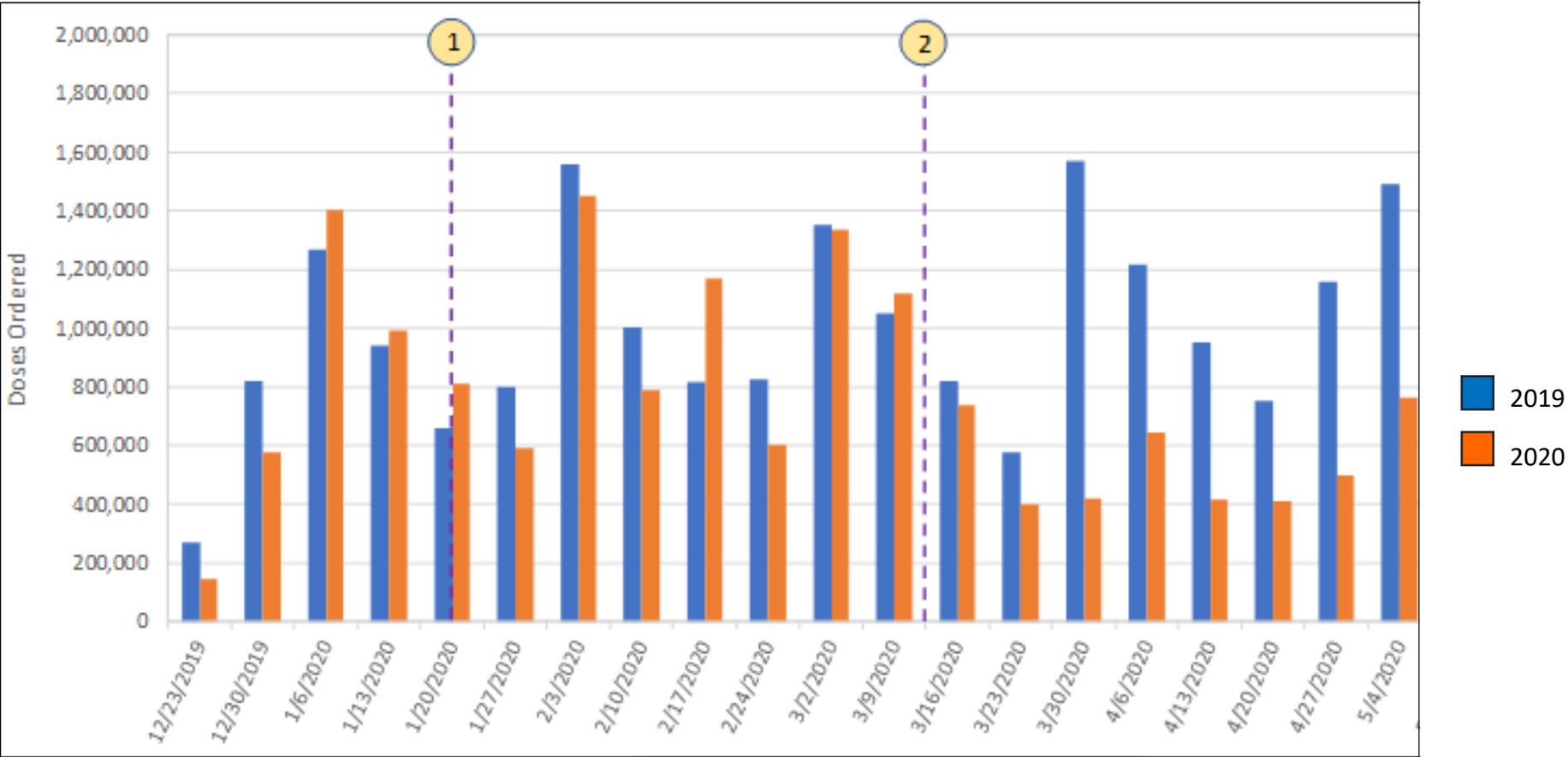
- Pediatric outpatient healthcare utilization improved in May, but remains well below baseline
- By May 10, pediatric outpatient visits:
  - Highest in children <2 years
  - Lowest in 3-5 year olds



# COVID-19 pandemic and disruptions to routine childhood vaccination

Weekly decreases in Vaccines for Children program provider orders for pediatric vaccines – United States, December 23, 2019-May 10, 2020

## All non-influenza vaccines



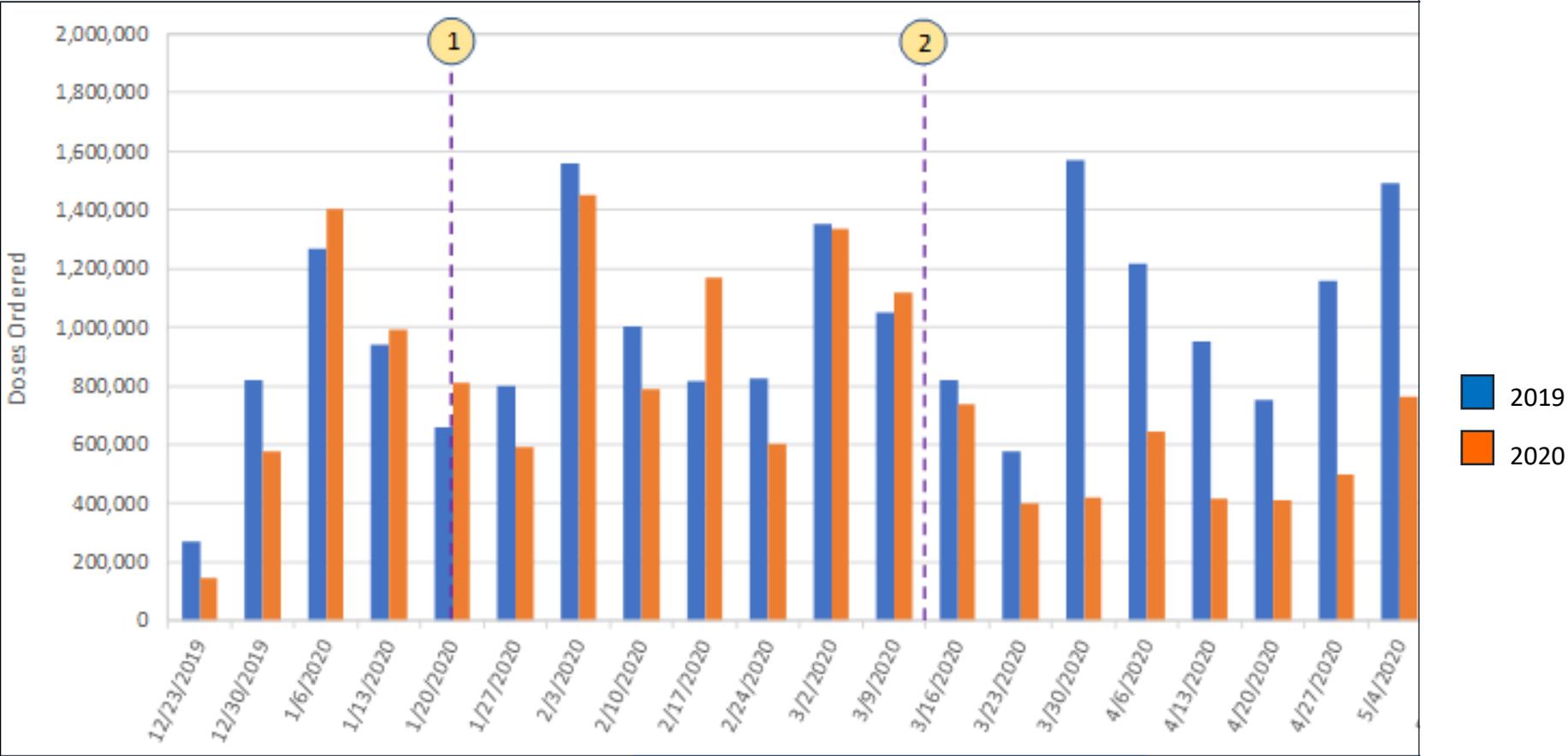
Notable Dates:  
1 1/20/2020: First US case reported (Washington state)  
2 3/13/2020: US national emergency declared

Source: CDC

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### All non-influenza vaccines



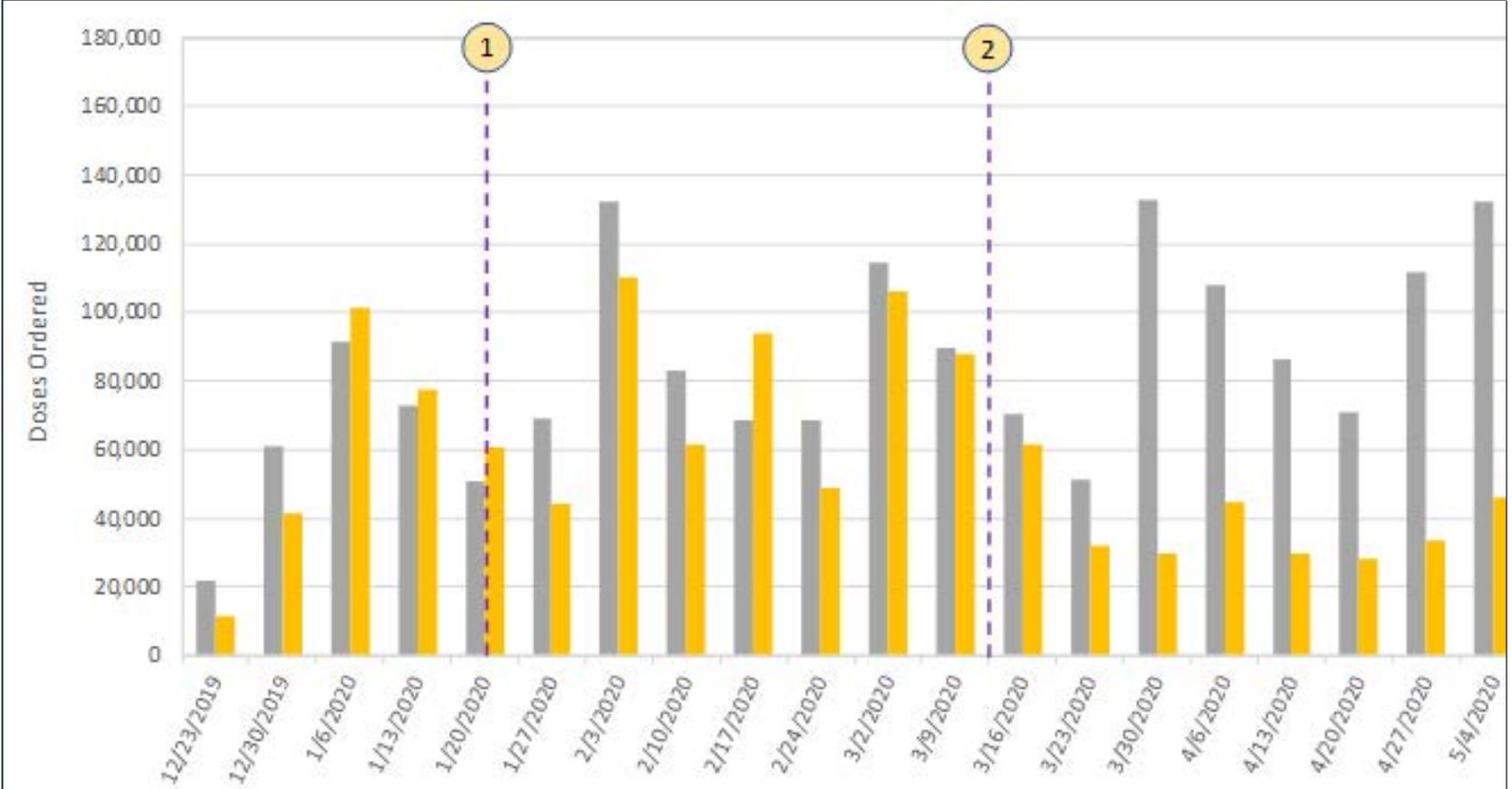
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# COVID-19 pandemic and disruptions to routine childhood vaccination

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## Measles-containing vaccine



2019  
2020

Notable Dates:  
1 1/20/2020: First US case reported (Washington state)  
2 3/13/2020: US national emergency declared

Source: CDC

# Primary care practices under stress

Economic struggles, reduced staffing, and low patient volume may all affect preventive care services

The Washington Post

## Small medical practices struggle to survive amid coronavirus pandemic



Among a survey of primary care providers in early May

- **77%** report severe or close to severe stress
- **70%** report a >50% decrease in patient volume
- **40%** had laid off staff
- **40%** reporting absences due to illnesses/self-quarantine

*Primary care collaborative survey, May 1-4, 2020 (n=773)*

# CDC activities with immunization programs and partners to support routine childhood vaccination

- **Monitor** vaccination service delivery to inform targeted interventions
- **Support**
  - Providers through the development of guidance and support materials
  - Catch-up vaccination through reminder/recall systems
  - Access to vaccines by identifying gaps in VFC provider network and increasing funding for VFC vaccine purchase and operations
  - Identification of policy interventions to support healthcare providers
- **Communicate**
  - Importance of vaccination to parents, providers, and partners
  - Information on VFC program to families
- **Plan** back-to-school vaccination activities during the summer and influenza vaccination in the fall

# Supporting healthcare providers to deliver childhood vaccines

- Ensure providers are aware of available financial support through the Provider Relief Fund and how to apply for funding
  - As of June 9, now available to Medicaid and CHIP providers
- Promote catch-up vaccination through dissemination of information on best practices for reminder/recall, including refocusing of immunization program quality improvement activities
- Disseminate guidance on the safe delivery of vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic

# CDC Interim Guidance for Immunization Services During COVID-19 Pandemic

- Vaccination is an essential medical service for all children and adolescents, ideally in the medical home
- Administer all due or overdue vaccines according to routine immunization schedule during the same visit
- Implement strategies to catch patients up on vaccines
  - Start with newborns, infants and children up to age 24 months, young children, and extending through adolescence
- Includes guidance for the safe delivery of vaccines (e.g., use of personal protective equipment, physical distancing)



# Communicating the importance of well-child and vaccination visits

- Encourage parents to return for well-child visits
- Use reminder/recall systems to help children get up to date as quickly as possible
- Discuss the safety protocols put in place to ensure patients can be safely vaccinated

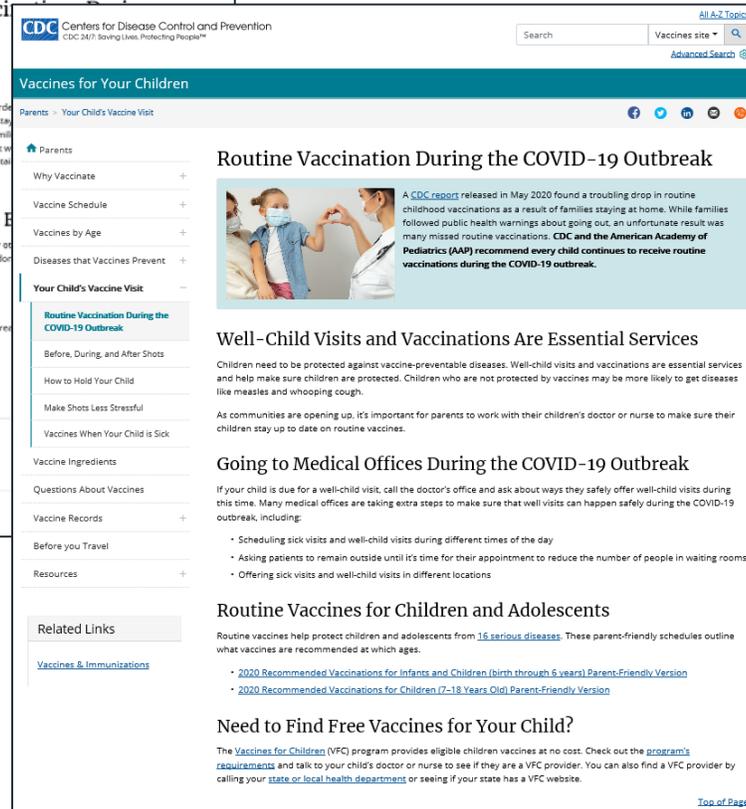
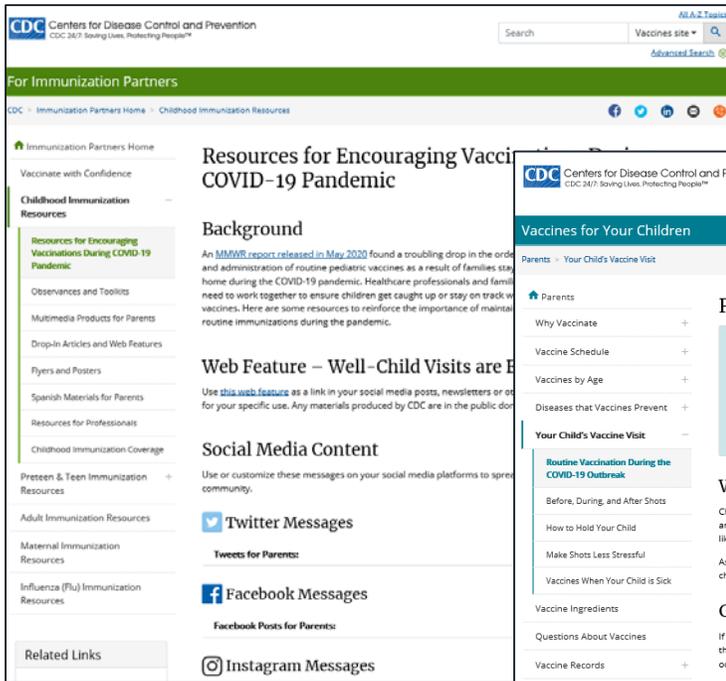


# Promoting awareness of Vaccines for Children (VFC) program among parents

- Prior to the pandemic, ~50% of U.S. children eligible to receive free vaccines through VFC
  - More may be eligible now due to recent loss insurance or increased economic hardship
- Parents of recently-eligible children may not be aware of VFC
- Partners and providers can help improve vaccine access by increasing awareness and enrollment in VFC program



# Resources for communicating with parents about routine vaccination during the COVID-19 pandemic



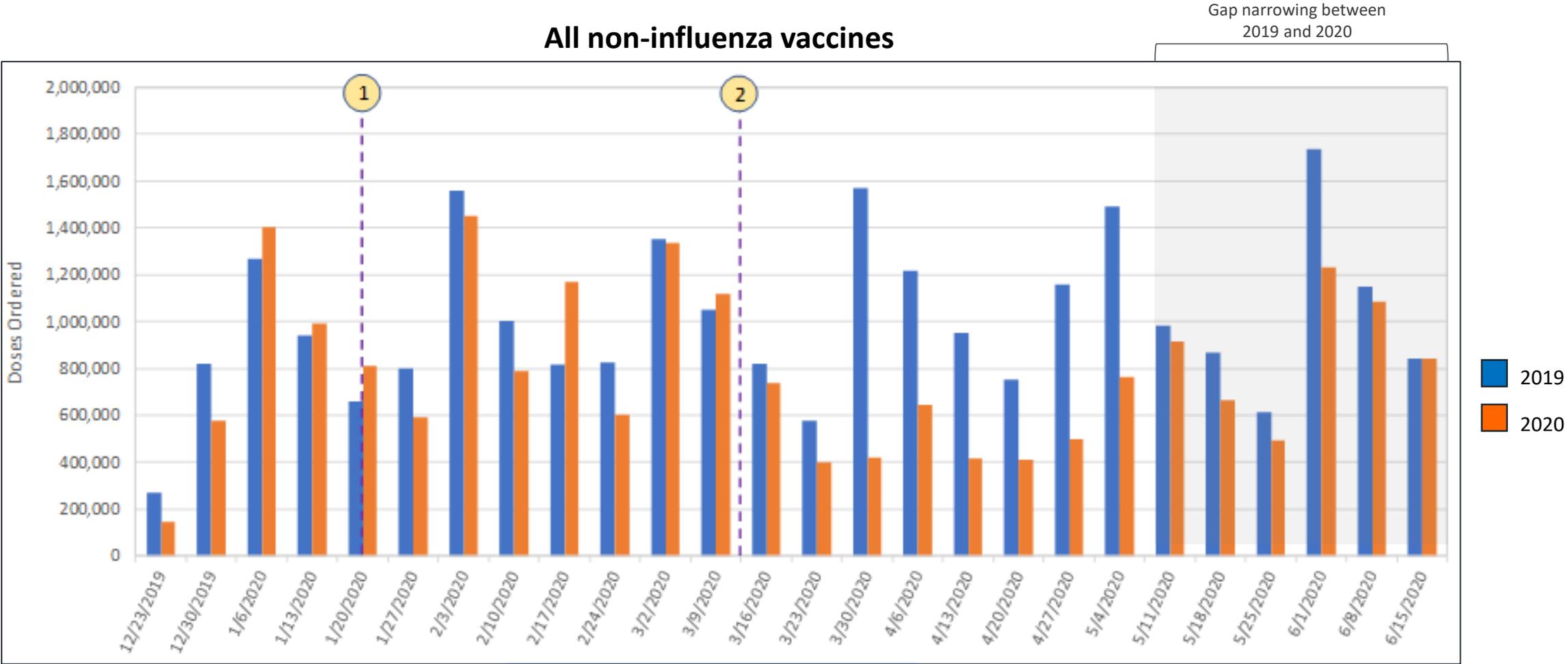
CDC resources for parents and immunization partners



AAP's #CallYourPediatrician campaign

# Signs of recovery in routine childhood vaccination

Weekly Vaccines for Children program provider orders for pediatric vaccines – United States, December 23, 2019-June 21, 2020



Notable Dates:

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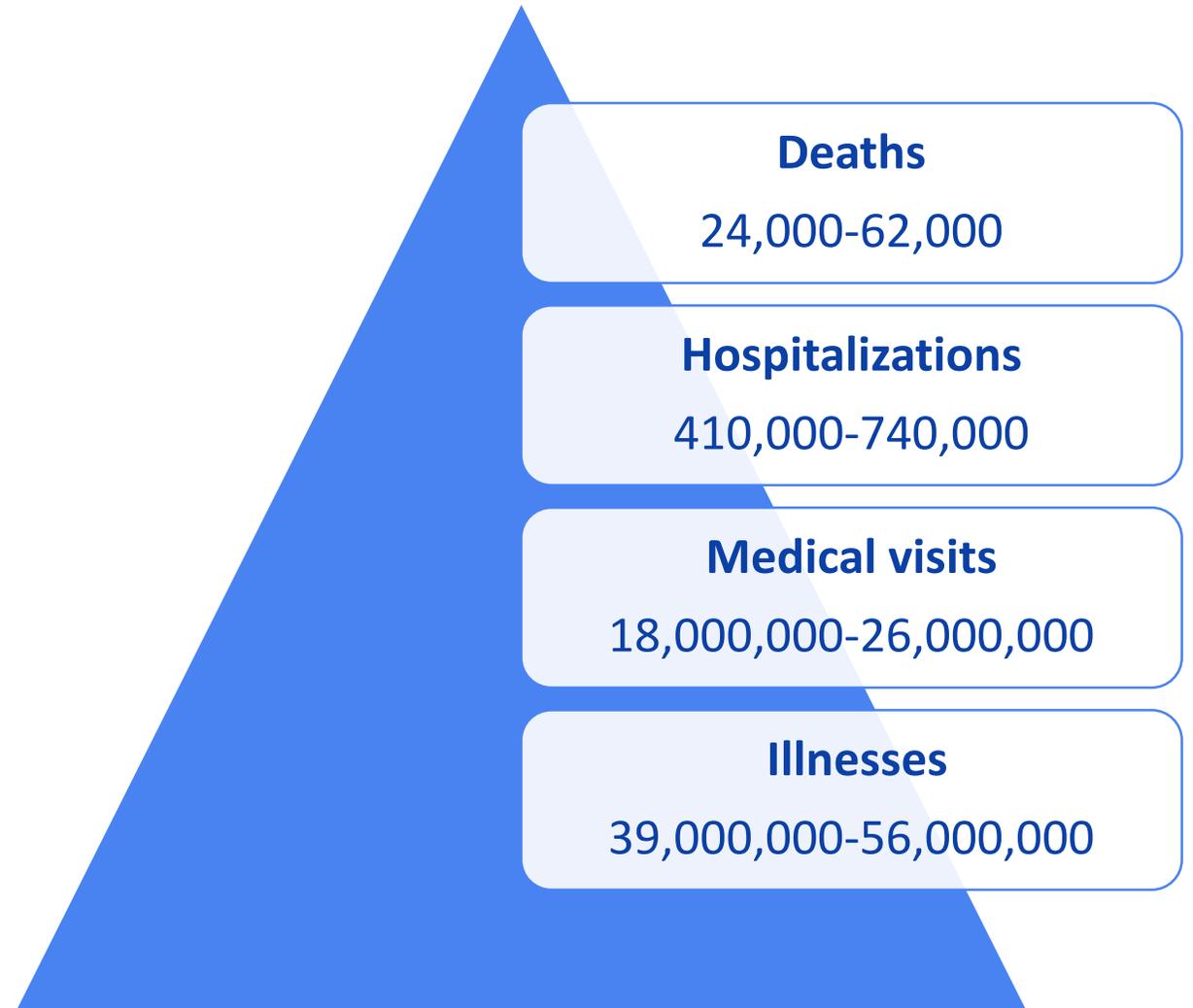
Source: CDC



# Influenza Vaccination, 2020-2021 Season

# Summary of 2019-2020 influenza season

- Two consecutive waves
  - 1<sup>st</sup> wave predominantly influenza B/Victoria viruses
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> wave driven by influenza A (H1N1)
- Pediatric deaths reported to CDC for the 2019-2020 season: **185\***



\*As of June 13, 2020

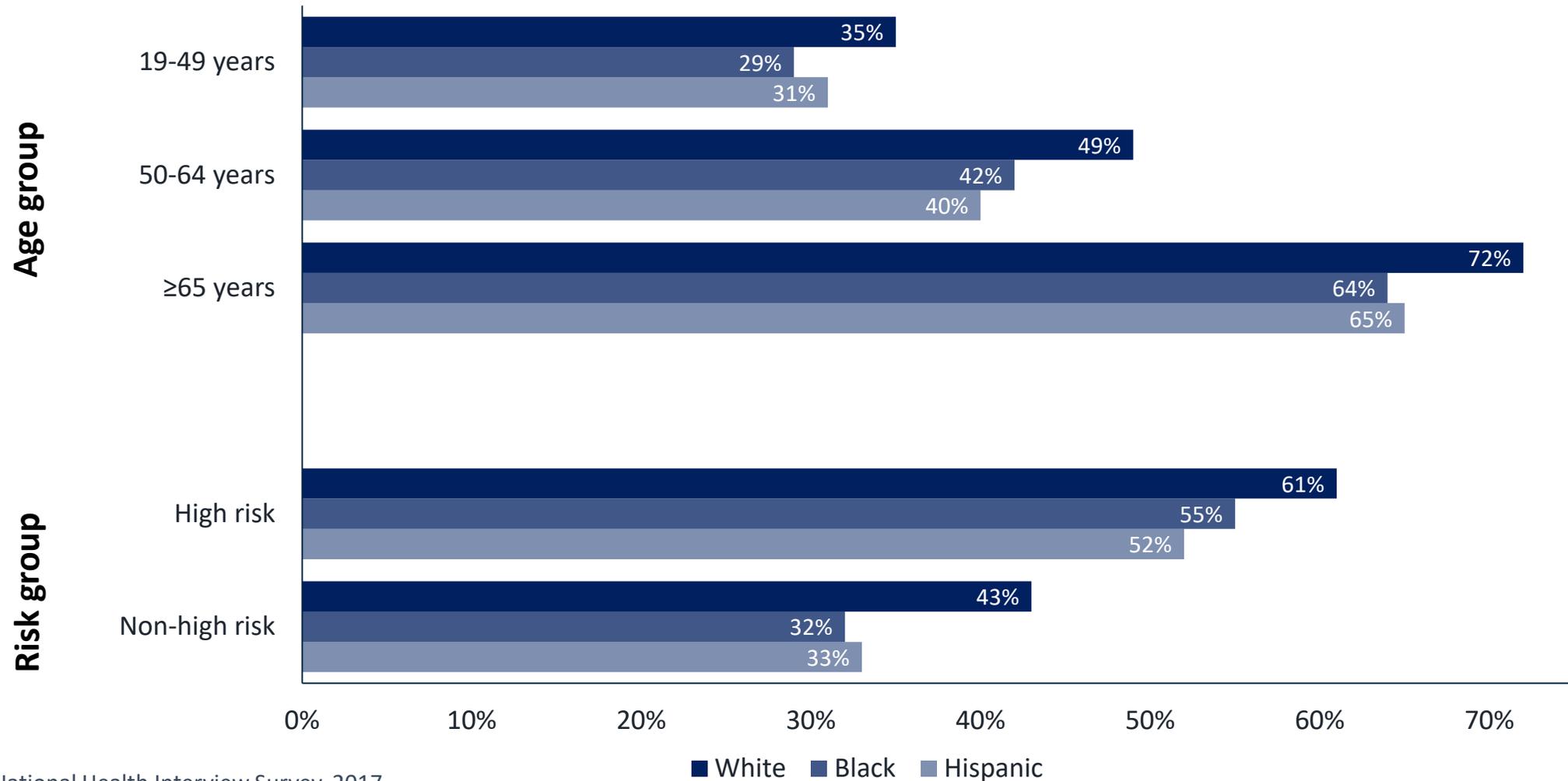
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/burden/preliminary-in-season-estimates.htm>

# Increasing seasonal influenza vaccine coverage to decrease healthcare utilization, 2020-2021

- We expect SARS-CoV-2 to continue to circulate in the fall
- Increasing influenza vaccine coverage will decrease stress on the healthcare system
  - Decrease doctor visits and hospitalizations
  - Decrease individuals needing diagnostic testing
- Focus on adults at higher risk from COVID-19
  - Staff and residents of long-term care facilities
  - Adults with underlying illnesses and African-Americans
  - Adults who are part of critical infrastructure

# Racial and ethnic disparities in influenza coverage

Reducing existing disparities will be important to protect minority and at-risk populations for both influenza and future COVID-19 vaccines

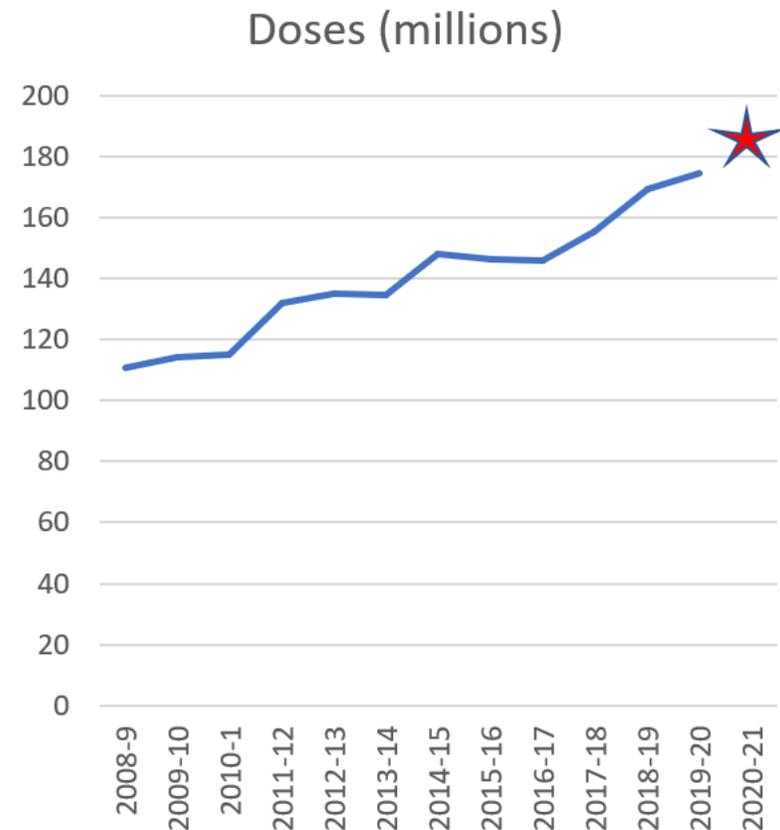


Source: National Health Interview Survey, 2017

# Influenza vaccination planning for 2020-2021 season

- Maximize available vaccine supply
  - Expect >180M doses for U.S. market
- Operational considerations
  - Outreach to those at higher risk
  - Planning for potential need for social distancing
  - Extending influenza vaccination season (September through December or later)
- Enhancing communication
  - Align with COVID-19 messaging
  - Messaging for African-American and Hispanic communities

Influenza Vaccine Doses Distributed By Season, 2008-9 to 2019-20, and Projected, 2020-21



# Supplemental Resources for Public Sector Influenza Vaccination for the 2020-2021 Influenza Season

- Two Components
  - Cooperative Agreement with 64 Immunization Program Awardees (2020-2021; \$140 million)
  - Supplemental influenza vaccine doses (2020; 7.1 million doses)
- Funding to support operational costs associated with planning and implementation of expanded influenza vaccination program extending into December or later
- Supplemental vaccine doses to be allocated among the awardees
  - Strong recommendation for awardee partnerships with Community Health Centers (CHCs)
  - Facilitating connections with CHCs through CDC relationship with the National Association of Community Health Centers

# Conclusions

- Substantial disruptions to routine childhood vaccination services have occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, though signs of recovery are now being seen
- Catch up for childhood vaccination needs to be undertaken now so clinical capacity can be directed to back-to-school and influenza vaccination in the summer and fall
- Solutions to existing disparities in influenza vaccination should be sought and applied to COVID-19 vaccination
- Immunization programs, partners, and providers can help get childhood vaccination back on track by supporting catch-up vaccination efforts and communicating with parents about safe vaccination during the pandemic



# Thank you

For more information, contact CDC  
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)  
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)



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