



Eric J. Holcomb
Governor

Kristina M. Box, MD, FACOG
State Health Commissioner

March 8, 2021

Urgent Action Needed:

Since the pandemic began, Indiana has seen and continues to see a sharp decline in vaccination rates as a result of closed clinics and patient apprehension. This has resulted in missed or delayed vaccination appointments. The trend has continued into 2021, which has the potential to cause the resurgence in vaccine-preventable diseases, such as meningococcal meningitis, measles, and pertussis.

During the months of the pandemic, there has been a substantial decrease in non-influenza vaccine doses administered and reported to CHIRP for children. Indiana had nearly an 85% decrease in immunizations administered for children 11-18 years of age during several months in 2020. In addition, there was a significant decline in VFC doses ordered by providers throughout 2020.

It is important to note that school immunization requirements for the 2021-22 school year will remain unchanged regardless of format (virtual or in-person). For the safest return to school, it is imperative to ensure that our children are up to date on **all recommended vaccines**. We must continue to be vigilant against vaccine preventable diseases amid this pandemic. Below are strategies the Immunization Division at the Indiana Department of Health strongly recommends:

- Accelerate the timing of back-to-school round-ups and wellness visits, particularly among older adolescents, rather than waiting until summer.
- Use CHIRP/EHR reminder-recalls focused on adolescents to notify families whose children are behind on vaccines.
- Follow up regularly with families who are not in compliance.
- Partner with school nurses to drive awareness and compliance.
- Offer on-site school immunization clinics (in-person or mobile units).
- Use standing orders to avoid missed opportunities.

This is a difficult time for all medical providers across the state, and the steps you take every day to keep our children and adults protected against vaccine preventable diseases are appreciated.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Dave McCormick'.

Dave McCormick, Director
Immunizations Division

To **promote**, **protect**, and **improve** the health and safety of all Hoosiers.