



CVP Update

Keeping Connecticut Kids Healthy



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<https://portal.ct.gov/immunization>

[860.509.7929](tel:860.509.7929)

DPH.Immunizations@ct.gov

[410 Capitol Ave, MS #11 MUN, Hartford, CT 06134](#)

October Observances

October 6th marks **National Child Health Day**, a moment to celebrate the health and well-being of our youngest community members. It's a reminder that keeping children healthy is a team effort. Immunizations help children stay safe and healthy, and the work we do helps build a brighter, healthier future for kids everywhere.



It's a great month to reflect on the power of prevention, especially as we look ahead to World Polio Day on October 24th. Thanks to vaccines, polio has been pushed to the brink of eradication, and continued immunization efforts are key to making sure no child suffers from this preventable disease again.

This month, we celebrate how far we've come, and we thank all our providers and partners for the work you do to keep us moving forward.

Annual Re-Enrollment Coming Soon!



The annual Connecticut Vaccine Program (CVP) and Connecticut Vaccines for Adults Program (CVFA) re-enrollment period is coming up! Please keep an eye out for a communication in the next couple weeks with more details. As a reminder, re-enrollments are done electronically in CT WiZ and will be **due in December**.

Data Quality Corner

CT WiZ "News" on Home Page

Every time you login to CT WiZ, please make it a habit to review the "News" section on the CT WiZ home page.

This is updated often with important and timely news for all users regarding changes in CT WiZ such as system down time, enhancements, vaccine ordering updates and much more.

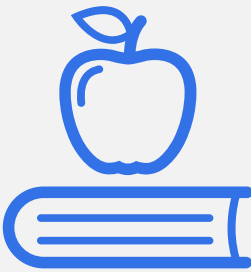
CVP Updates

Vaccine Ordering in CT WiZ:

- Orders are by pack size (not by doses). As you add vaccines to your order, the total amount will update. Carefully review the total order for accuracy to ensure all amounts are correct before submitting to DPH.
- If you notice any issues with an order, contact DPH immediately at 860-509-7929.
- Clinics should only be ordering for a one-month supply to avoid over stock. Orders can be placed multiple times a month, if needed.
- If you will not be able to use doses prior to their expiration date, submit a help desk ticket (select Immunizations (CT WiZ) – CT WiZ Training and Inventory Support-CT WiZ Inventory Management) and DPH will provide a transfer list.



2024–2025 Connecticut School Immunization Data Now Available



The Connecticut Department of Public Health has released the 2024–25 School Immunization Survey results. Connecticut reported the highest kindergarten MMR coverage in the nation at 98.2%, a 0.5% increase from last year and well above the national average of 92.5%. Connecticut is one of only 10 states to exceed the 95% herd immunity threshold for measles. Public school kindergartens reported higher coverage (98.4%) compared to private schools (95.1%).

Medical exemptions among kindergarteners remained steady at 0.4%, while religious exemptions continued to decline, dropping from 0.1% to 0.02%. These trends reflect both changes in state law and the ongoing efforts of providers and schools to keep children on schedule with recommended vaccines.

It is important to note that kindergarten enrollment significantly declined this year, and the overall survey response rate decreased as well. This is likely due in part to recent changes in the state’s minimum age requirement for kindergarten entry, which impacted enrollment data.

Despite these shifts, Connecticut continues to maintain strong vaccination coverage, protecting children and communities across the state.

You can explore state, county, and school-level data on the [DPH School Immunization Survey webpage](#).

Resources for Respiratory Virus Season

RSV, Flu, and COVID-19 Resource from CT DPH

CT DPH has a great [new resource](#) for providers to share with patients with questions about respiratory virus season.

RSV Resources from CDC

The CDC released four new at-a-glance resources for healthcare professionals on RSV prevention products. Providers can use these resources to help their clinical teams prepare for RSV prevention in adults and infants this fall. These materials are available on the CDC’s main [RSV Page](#).

Influenza Resources from AIM

[Connecting the Dots: Influenza Vaccination](#) is a one-page resource guide designed to support influenza vaccination efforts. This PDF contains links to the latest tools, materials, and initiatives, helping immunization programs, healthcare providers, and community partners access what they need quickly and easily.

Educational Resources from Vaccinate Your Family

Vaccinate Your Family has shared a new free, interactive, self-paced educational program called the [Vaccination Community Learning Program \(VCLP\)](#). The VCLP is the newly updated and expanded version of the Vaccination Community Navigator curriculum.

These courses help ANYONE build vaccine knowledge, communication skills, and confidence to promote vaccination in their communities. All courses are free, mobile-friendly, and accessible from anywhere. Right now, the VCLP is only available in English. Spanish translations are in development.

Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) Updates

ACIP September 2025 Meeting

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) met on September 18-19, 2025, to review and vote on recommendations related to MMRV (measles, mumps, rubella, varicella), Hepatitis B, and COVID-19 vaccination. Overall, discussion and votes reflected the recent emphasis on shared decision making but maintained most access to vaccines.

ACIP recommendations have not yet been signed by CDC leadership, which currently limits our ability to place orders.

CT DPH will send out a communication with more information as it becomes available.



Webinar Opportunities

The Boston University Center on Emerging Infectious Diseases (CEID) Politics & Health Lab is conducting a free webinar, [Vaccine Hesitancy: Past, Present, and Future - Public Health Conversations](#) on October 8th from 1-2:30 PM ET. This discussion will explore vaccine hesitancy and communication strategies in the United States amidst the resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases.

Also on October 8th, the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) will be hosting a [2025-2026 Respiratory Season Update webinar](#). The event starts at 1:30 ET and is free to attend.

Webinar Recordings

In case you missed it, the September session of the [2025 Rural HPV Vaccination Learning Community](#) is also available to view on YouTube. The session [recording](#), [slide deck](#), and updated [resource roundup](#) are now available.



Additionally, the Association of Health Care Journalists hosted a webinar [Preparing for Reporting on Autism, Vaccines, and Related Science](#), which provided insights and extensive resources to help explain how to navigate the science behind autism, vaccines, and the expected HHS report on autism causes.

Finally, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' (ACOG) Maternal Immunization Task Force hosted a webinar "Preparing for Respiratory Virus Season: A Review of Maternal Immunization Guidance and Communication Strategies to Increase Vaccine Uptake and Confidence" on September 17. For a [recording of the webinar](#) and the [resources](#) shared during the webinar, please visit ACOG's website.

Employee Spotlight

Khristie Walser, Health Services Worker

Khristie joined the Immunization Program team at the Department of Public Health in 2002. You may have spoken with Khristie if you've called the Immunizations Program - as one of the first points of contact, Khristie fields calls from both the public and healthcare providers, offering clear, compassionate guidance and connecting people to the resources they need. Whether she's answering questions about vaccines or helping providers navigate the CT WiZ platform, Khristie consistently delivers outstanding customer service with kindness and professionalism. Her dedication ensures that our program runs smoothly and that those we serve feel heard, supported, and informed.

Outside of work, Khristie enjoys organizing family activities for her children and grandchildren, especially planning fun fall events. She also loves spending time with friends and visiting her son's restaurant for its amazing food. At home, she loves to cook and experiment with new recipes (the more ingredients, the better!), staying updated on state and world news, and playing Farmville.



Provider Spotlight

Dr. Claire Free – 2025 Connecticut Immunization Champion

Not all heroes wear capes. Some wear white coats and vaccinate a generation. One such hero is Dr. Claire Free, who was named the Association of Immunization Managers’ (AIM) 2025 Immunization Champion for Connecticut, a well-earned honor for a provider whose name is synonymous with dedication, compassion, and vaccine advocacy in her Brookfield, Connecticut community.

Whether it’s a routine childhood immunization or a deeper conversation addressing vaccine hesitancy, Dr. Free approaches every conversation with empathy and science. And her dedication does not stop at the exam room. As a member of the Danbury-area Immunization Action Plan (IAP) advisory group, she has been a collaborative voice in community efforts to expand access and equity in vaccination, ensuring all children, regardless of background, can be protected from preventable diseases.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, when new requirements called for real-time electronic reporting of vaccines to CT WiZ, Dr. Free continued to demonstrate her commitment to her patients. Like many providers who had practiced for many years, Dr. Free initially kept paper medical records and had not yet embraced utilizing CT WiZ on a regular basis. Instead of resisting change, she led it. Together with her dedicated nurse, Liz, and their small team, Dr. Free learned to navigate CT WiZ, mastering data entry, vaccine ordering, and inventory management. Additionally, the team undertook the task of entering all 1,200 of their patients’ historical immunization records, ensuring those families would have accurate, accessible immunization records long after Dr. Free retires.



Dr. Claire Free (center), 2025 CT Immunization Champion, with Dr. Lynn Sosa (left), Dir. of Infectious Disease at CTDPH, Pam Bates (center), Norwalk/Danbury area IAP Coordinator, and Natalie Holbert (right), Epi in the CT DPH Immunization Program

Dr. Free’s innovation did not stop there. Partnering with IAP staff through the CDC’s Immunization Quality Improvement for Providers (IQIP) program, she made a major push to increase HPV vaccination rates in her adolescent patients. She started recommending the vaccine at age 9, trained her staff to deliver a unified message to families, and added HPV educational materials to her waiting room. In just two years, the rate of adolescents receiving one dose of the HPV vaccine by age 13 rose by over 60 percentage points and up-to-date by age 13 rates climbed over 20 percentage points at her practice, an extraordinary achievement.

When asked what made her an advocate for immunization, Dr. Free shared a powerful memory. As a young resident, she treated a child suffering from a severe form of varicella (chickenpox) pneumonia. Despite every effort, the child passed away, an outcome Dr. Free expressed could have been prevented with a routine vaccine. That moment never left her and drove her continued vaccine advocacy.

That dedication and advocacy is clear in her interactions with families. Parents describe her as thoughtful, intuitive, and grounded. As one mother wrote, “She really knows your child and she is the old school kind of doctor that I wish we found more often.”

Dr. Free is the provider who goes the extra mile, learns the new system, has hard conversations, and always puts her patients first. She is a difference-maker and true champion for immunizations.

We thank Dr. Free for her commitment to Connecticut and wish her a happy retirement!



Dr. Claire Free (center), 2025 Connecticut Immunization Champion, with retired Brookfield Director of Health and Medical Advisor Dr. Raymond Sullivan (left), current Brookfield Director of Health Eren Ceylan (center), and Connecticut Department of Public Health Director of Infectious Disease Dr. Lynn Sosa (right)