



CVP Update



National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM)



August is National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM). This annual observance highlights the efforts of *healthcare professionals* to protect patients of all ages against vaccine-preventable diseases through on-time vaccination.

During NIAM, encourage your patients to schedule appointments to ensure they are up to date on annual exams and recommended vaccines. Research has consistently shown that

healthcare providers are the most trusted source of vaccine information for parents and patients.

Use the resources on the [CDC's NIAM webpage](#) to assist you in communicating about vaccinations during August and throughout the year. For a listing of local NIAM events planned throughout the state and open to the public and your patients view the [2022 Local NIAM Events](#).

NIAM serves as an important reminder to catch up on routine visits and vaccinations that may have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. For those patients who are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination, you play a critical role in helping vaccine recipients understand the importance of vaccination and that [COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective](#). Check out this toolkit on [Talking to Recipients about COVID-19 Vaccination](#), where you will find resources to help you share clear and accurate information about COVID-19 vaccines, raise awareness about the benefits of vaccination, and address common questions and concerns about what to expect when getting vaccinated.

New Immunization Program Website!



Check out our new Immunization Program webpages at portal.ct.gov/immunization. Don't worry – your old bookmarked URLs will redirect to the new webpages where you will find the same content, just in a new format!

The updates are being done in phases, so there may be some webpages that are still in the old design for the next few weeks. Soon, all pages will be in the updated design.

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CT WiZ Law Update 7/1/22

Under the regulatory authority of Conn. Gen. Stat. § 19a-7h as amended by Section 493 of Public Act 22118, each health care provider, school nurse, local health department or district, or federal agency providing healthcare services and other states' immunization information systems shall comply with the policies and procedures in order to utilize the Department's immunization information system. These policies and procedures replace the requirements of sections 19a-7h-1 to 19a-7h-5, inclusive, of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. Please review the [Policies and procedures regarding The Connecticut Immunization Information System](#).

The policies and procedures specify the access and reporting procedures needed for vaccinating healthcare providers to comply, either through electronic means by HL7 data exchange or by requesting access to the CT WiZ to enter required information in the web-based secure user interface. The schedule for reporting is listed to enable providers enough time to complete the onboarding process or user interface training in order to comply with the deadline. They also specify how a vaccine recipient, or in the case of a minor, a parent or guardian, can have access to the vaccine recipient's vaccine information or decline participation in the CT WiZ.

DPH is here to support healthcare providers to [report to](#) and utilize CT WiZ as it becomes a lifespan immunization information system with consolidated immunization information into one reliable source. This information can be used to guide patient care, improve vaccination rates, and reduce vaccine-preventable disease.



Don't Wait to Vaccinate Against COVID-19!

CDC now recommends that all children 6 months through 5 years of age should receive either the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to better protect them from COVID-19. All children, including children who have already had COVID-19, should get vaccinated. **Everyone ages 6 months and older should get vaccinated against COVID-19.** Everyone 5 years and older should also get a COVID-19 booster, if eligible.

Last month, [FDA's VRPBAC met to discuss COVID-19 strain selection/future boosters](#). They voted in favor of including a SARS-CoV-2 omicron component in COVID-19 vaccines that would be used for boosters in the U.S. FDA has advised manufacturers seeking to update their COVID-19 vaccines to develop modified vaccines that add an omicron BA.4/5 spike

protein component to the current vaccine composition to create a two component (bivalent) booster vaccine, so that the modified vaccines can potentially be used starting fall 2022.

When the new booster dose formulation first becomes available, it is unlikely that it will be authorized for all ages; initially it may only be authorized for adults and possibly adolescents. **Please help us to share this message with parents who may be waiting to vaccinate their children until the new formulation is available. Don't wait--it is critical to ensure that everyone is [up-to date on their COVID-19 vaccines](#) because it provides a base of protection against serious outcomes COVID-19 caused by circulating strains of SARS-CoV-2.** This is especially true for children, as they soon prepare for a new school year.

New!

PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT

Wheeler Family Health and Wellness Center

What do you get when you have a physician, a customer service representative, nurses, and quality specialists work together? Nothing short of a dream team – and that is just what Wheeler Family Health & Wellness Center built when they created their Immunization Quality Improvement Team. Their team, which meets every other week, is focused on increasing immunization rates for their patients 0-2 years of age and is comprised of six key team members pictured below in a team Zoom meeting! After identifying room for improvement in their rates of vaccination in patients 0-2 years of age and running reports to identify patients not up to date, the team created many initiatives to work towards their goal, including verifying contact information to improve reliable contact between the office and patients, a welcome packet given during the 1-month-old visit that contains information on the immunization schedule, and Reminder/Recall postcards sent through a no-cost program with Pfizer. The Immunization Quality Improvement Team also saw that there was work to be done on the immunization rates for their Black patients and have made targeted efforts to reduce health disparities and to close gaps.

Wheeler focused on building a team comprised of individuals with different backgrounds, strengths and expertise, ranging from quality improvement specialists with knowledge in root cause analysis to medical experts. Kristin Gardner, RN also highlighted the Immunization Quality Improvement for Providers (IQIP) visits from DPH staff and the CT WiZ reporting functionalities she learned from the visits as a key resource that has been helpful in the team’s mission, saying “I also think that doing IQIP and learning CT WiZ was important. Before the IQIP visit, I had no clue there were [Reminder/Recall] reports that I can run and it tells us all the patients that are due for vaccines and we can run the report by the age cohort. I didn’t know about them and a lot of other FQHCs likely don’t realize some of the things that are in CT WiZ too. It is important to use your resources and explore what you can do with the tools you are given.” The take home message: an interdisciplinary team dedicated to making small but meaningful changes can have a big impact. **View the full spotlight story on [our website](#)!**

For more information on the work Wheeler Family Health and Wellness Center is doing, please visit their [website](#). If you are interested in learning more about different resources DPH offers for your practice’s quality improvement initiatives, please contact Natalie Anderson at Natalie.anderson@ct.gov.



Top row, left to right: Kristin Gardner, RN Site Supervisor; Linda Russo VP Quality

Bottom row, left to right: Jessica Suwala, Quality Specialist; Barbara “Basia” Szajda, Lead Physician; Valerie Fusco, Licensed Practical Nurse

Not pictured: Liliam Navarro, Senior Customer Service Representative

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Alicia Bruno, Health Program Assistant

Alicia moved back to Connecticut after working for six years at the Massachusetts DPH to be closer to family. Since joining the Connecticut DPH Immunization Program as a Health Program Assistant for the CVP team, occasionally you may catch her making fudge at a local general store on the weekend. In her spare time she enjoys paint pouring, watching hummingbirds visit while she reads outdoors, baking, and spending time with family and friends. She also has two cats, Brockton and Bailey that entertain her throughout the day. She and her husband, Casey, are looking forward to their overdue trip to Italy in the Fall.

Data Quality Corner

Providers should ensure their electronic health record (EHR) is updated with the current code sets. **Providers or their vendor should visit CDC's [IIS Data Code Sets](#) webpage to access the UPDATED codes and crosswalks.** **TIP:** On the CDC webpage, enter your email to get updates. This will ensure you keep your system updated, have accurate and complete reporting, and can utilize complete query and response with CT WiZ.

- **New: Release of 2022/2023 Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Codes**
 - CDC released the 2022/2023 seasonal influenza vaccine codes and crosswalk on July 25th.
- **New: CPT Codes Approved for ACAM2000 and JYNNEOS Smallpox-Monkeypox**
 - The American Medical Association approved two new CPT codes for ACAM2000 and JYNNEOS smallpox-monkeypox vaccines.
- **New: Initial Novavax Lot Number and Expiration Date**
 - Novavax released one lot record for its adult primary series COVID-19 vaccine, which received emergency use authorization from FDA on July 13. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices reviewed and recommended the vaccine.
 - Visit CDC's [COVID-19 Vaccine Lot Number and Expiration Dates](#) webpage to view the updated lot files or to register for access.

Vaccine Preventable Diseases Update

The Immunizations Program is asking providers to review the “Reportable Diseases, Emergency Illnesses and Health Conditions” document found on the DPH website. Vaccine preventable diseases such as measles, poliomyelitis and diphtheria are considered category 1 diseases and should be reported by telephone to the DPH (860-509-7944) on the day of recognition and/or strong suspicion of disease. Vaccine preventable diseases such as mumps, varicella, pertussis, rubella, hepatitis A & B, etc. are considered category 2 diseases and should be reported within 12 hours of recognition and/or suspicion of disease. Again, reporting these diseases is a requirement in the State of Connecticut. Please find the complete list of reportable diseases along with the Reportable Disease Confidential Case Report Form (PD-23) on the [DPH “forms” webpage](#).

If you would like to unsubscribe from these communications, please send an email to Dph.immunizations@ct.gov with the subject line “Unsubscribe from CVP Program communications”.