

Immunization Info Lagging for Children Under 6

BY MIRIAM E. TUCKER
Senior Writer

Fewer than half of U.S. children under 6 years of age participated in an immunization information system in 2003, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported.

One of the Healthy People 2010 goals is to increase to at least 95% the proportion of children under 6 years of age who participate in a fully operational, population-based immunization registry. Immunization registries collect data from multiple providers, generate recall and reminder notices, and assess vaccination coverage. An "immunization information system (IIS)" is defined as a registry with added capabilities, such as vaccine management, adverse event reporting, lifespan vaccination histories, and interoperability with electronic medical records.

A 2003 survey of vaccine program managers in 50 states, five cities, and the District of Columbia revealed that approximately 44% of U.S. children under 6 years of age participated in an IIS, the CDC said (MMWR 2005;54:722-4).

Nine of the regions—Arkansas, Arizona, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Michigan, New York City, North Dakota, Oregon, and San Antonio—had achieved

the 2010 goal of at least 95% participation of children less than 6 years of age. An additional eight were approaching the national objective, with participation of 81%-94%.

Nationwide, 76% of public vaccination provider sites and 36% of private provider sites submitted immunization data to an IIS during the last 6 months of 2003. Twenty-five of the 56 regions reported that 95% or more of public provider sites submitted data to an IIS, while only five re-

ported that 95% or more of private sites had done so.

A substantial number of the respondents reported linkages between an IIS and other information systems or entities, a process which enables data consolidation. Among them were 22 reporting electronic data sharing with a Medicaid Management Information System, 36 reporting data linkages with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and 26 report-

ing IIS data access by health plans.

Such linkages are expected to result in more comprehensive immunization histories, increased coverage levels, better support for outbreak containment, and decreased costs associated with overimmunization, as well as improved program effectiveness and efficiency, the CDC said.

Current efforts are being aimed at developing nationwide data standards, which will be essential for system interoperability, according to the report. ■

Young Children In First Tier for Flu Vaccine

In the event of an influenza vaccine shortage during the 2005-2006 season, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has advised physicians to prioritize people age 65 years and older with comorbid conditions if their local vaccine supplies are extremely limited.

A three-tiered chart, developed by the CDC and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, stratifies priority groups based on the likelihood of flu-related deaths and hospitalizations (MMWR 2005;54:749-50).

If a vaccine shortage occurs, but local supplies are not extremely limited, all people in the first tier should be given equal priority. The first tier, ranked as follows, includes people aged 65 years and older with comorbid conditions, long-term-care facility residents, people aged 2-64 years with comorbid conditions, people aged 65 years and older without comorbid conditions, children aged 6-23 months, pregnant women, health care workers, and any caregivers and household contacts of children younger than 6 months of age.

If additional inactivated vaccine doses become available during a shortage, vaccinations could be offered to people in tiers 2 and 3, which include household contacts of children or adults at increased risk for flu-related complications, healthy people aged 50-64 years, and healthy people aged 2-49 years, according to the CDC.

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References: 1. Krivda MS. Tips for selecting appropriate cleansers and moisturizers for patients who have special skincare needs. *Skin & Aging*. June 2004;65-71. 2. Centany [prescribing information]. Skillman, NJ: OrthoNeutrogena; May 2003.

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