

Final reminder: MnVFC annual re-enrollment due today

This is a reminder that sites enrolled in the Minnesota Vaccines for Children (MnVFC) program must renew their enrollment every year by completing required reports and trainings by today, Nov. 30. If you do not submit the required forms by today, we may suspend ordering privileges for your site.

Visit [MnVFC Required Reports and Trainings \(www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/hcp/mnvfc/required.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/hcp/mnvfc/required.html) for more details. Please contact us at health.mnvfc@state.mn.us if you have questions.

MIIC biannual webinar series recordings and CEUs

MIIC has completed its fall webinar series! It was well attended by engaged participants. Recordings can be found on the [MIIC User Guidance and Training Resources page \(www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/miic/train/index.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/miic/train/index.html). Continuing education units (CEUs) are available to anyone who attended the webinars live or those who listen to the recordings. The CEU evaluation survey can be found linked under the recordings on the website. MIIC will hold its spring 2023 webinar series in April/May of 2023. If you have any questions, please reach out to the MIIC Help Desk at health.miichelp@state.mn.us.

Vaccine equity: Restart MMR vaccine conversations with parents previously hesitant

Did you know that in past measles outbreaks, parents previously hesitant to get their child the MMR vaccine reconsidered when they learned that measles was occurring in Minnesota? Keep that in mind when recalling patients who are overdue for MMR and other catch-up vaccinations. It's important to include those who have previously refused MMR vaccine for their child and use the current measles outbreak as an opportunity to restart that conversation. Many parents just need reassurance that the MMR vaccine is safe and will protect their child. Be sure to provide information about side effects and what they can do to manage them. Recalling all children who have not received MMR vaccine and taking time to have these conversations helps build health care equity in Minnesota.

To support these conversations, Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) providers can now bill Medical Assistance for stand-alone vaccination counseling visits, which includes MMR along with COVID-19 and other routine vaccines for children and adults. To learn more, visit the [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\) page of the MHCP Provider Manual \(www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&DocName=DHS16_150092#vc\)](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&DocName=DHS16_150092#vc).

COVID-19 bivalent booster fact sheet

A new resource has been developed to provide information to patients about the updated bivalent booster shot. The updated booster helps protect against newer variants of the COVID-19 virus that are currently spreading, specifically the BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron variants. Please review the [Why You Should Get an Updated \(Bivalent\) Booster \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/bivalentfs.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/bivalentfs.pdf) fact sheet and share it with your patients.

Varicella Update

Varicella cases and outbreaks are on the rise. There have been 153 cases reported so far in 2022, putting us on track to exceed the previous years' numbers for the second consecutive year. Additionally, more cases this year are associated with outbreaks or clusters of

varicella. With this increase we want to remind health care providers of some key points:

Varicella is reportable.

Varicella is a reportable disease in Minnesota. Both clinically diagnosed and lab confirmed cases must be reported to MDH by the diagnosing health care provider, the laboratory performing the testing, and the child care or school (when a child is diagnosed). The reporting of each of these groups is important as each provides different pieces of information needed to successfully determine how to prevent further cases.

Testing for varicella is important.

Testing is an important piece of successfully diagnosing varicella. However, Minnesota has seen a significant decline in varicella testing; only 38% of cases reported in 2021 were confirmed through laboratory testing. Clinical diagnosis is not always reliable, and reports of misdiagnosis have increased. Laboratory confirmation not only prevents unnecessary exclusions by helping rule out varicella, but it also supports appropriate and timely implementation of outbreak prevention efforts when used to confirm varicella.

MDH offers free testing for all suspected varicella cases, which may help expand access to those populations that are under or uninsured, visit [Laboratory Testing for Varicella \(Chickenpox\) and Zoster \(Shingles\) \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/varicella/hcp/labtesting.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/varicella/hcp/labtesting.html).

Minnesota vaccination coverage highlight: Polio

Polio has been in the recent news over the summer when a case of paralytic polio was reported. We don't often hear about polio anymore, but it is a reminder that old diseases we vaccinate for can come back, especially when people are not up to date for polio and other vaccinations.

In Minnesota, vaccination coverage rates overall declined during the pandemic including polio vaccination coverage. Coverage for polio dropped from 86.6% in 2020 to 83.8% in 2022. Coverage rates should be above 90% to protect a community. People may not be aware that they or a member of their family are not up to date for polio or other vaccinations.

The Minnesota Immunization Information Connection (MIIC) has several tools to help assess polio and other vaccination coverage rates for your organization like assessment reports, client follow up, and a free reminder recall texting program. For more information on these features visit [MIIC User Guidance and Training Resources \(www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/miic/train/index.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/miic/train/index.html) and contact the MIIC Help Desk to sign up for the texting program at health.miichelp@state.mn.us. Primary care providers and local public health departments are also eligible for the Immunization Quality Improvement Program (IQIP), a program that focuses on planning improvement activities and measuring childhood and adolescent immunization rates over time.

Did you know that one case of paralytic polio could mean that there are potentially hundreds to thousands of people that have been infected with polio? If you want to learn more about polio and other vaccine preventable diseases, check out You Call Shots! at [CDC You Call the Shots: Vaccines Web-based Training Course \(www.cdc.gov/vaccines/ed/youcalltheshots.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/ed/youcalltheshots.html). Continuing education credits are available.