

# NAPNAP Position Statement on Immunizations

Despite exceptional progress in abating some of the life-threatening diseases of childhood, outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases continue to occur (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2004b; Tanaka, Vited, Pascual, Tate, & Murphy, 2003). To prevent the spread of communicable childhood diseases, a high level of immunization against vaccine-preventable diseases needs to be achieved and sustained. All children, adolescents, and adults need to be immunized according to current CDC Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices parameters, including adolescents and adults. Additionally, all children need access to immunizations regardless of their social and economic status or the type of insurance they have.

Successful immunization rates in children can be achieved only by increasing public awareness of the benefits of vaccines, ensuring access to care, and advocating for funding so that immunizations are

affordable for all persons (National Academies Institute of Medicine, 2004; Plotkin & Orenstein, 2004). To realize the full benefit of vaccines, families need complete, culturally sensitive, and accurate information addressing the benefits and risks of immunizations and must understand that they should actively participate in immunization programs. Thorough and accurate information is provided in written format on the Vaccine Information Statements supplied by the CDC. The Vaccine Information Statements should be provided at each immunization encounter. Pediatric nurse practitioners are responsible for educating families regarding the indications, contraindications, adverse effects, and timeliness of initial and booster doses of vaccines. Additional information should include care of the child following immunizations.

A strong national immunization infrastructure is necessary to ensure delivery of vaccine, maintain coverage rates, achieve outbreak

control, and provide education (CDC, 2004c). Additionally, the national immunization registry system must be utilized to monitor immunization participation. To increase demand and ensure adequate supply for immunizations, increased funding at the federal, state, and local level is necessary to support immunization programs and educational campaigns.

In an effort to ensure that all children receive immunizations, NAPNAP affirms to:

1. Encourage pediatric health care providers to implement comprehensive practices conducive to immunization compliance (CDC, 2004a).
2. Encourage members to increase the awareness of parents/caregivers, child care providers, and other professionals regarding immunizations through the active support of educational programs for the public in schools, child care facilities, libraries, and other appropriate venues.
3. Support federal and state, and local legislation that aims to ensure that immunizations are available, accessible, and affordable.
4. Increase PNP awareness of current vaccine information and barriers to immunization administration through appropriate educational programs and materials.
5. Actively promote the continued development of the national immunization registry.
6. Encourage all pediatric health care providers to conduct immunization reviews for quality assurance purposes.
7. Encourage pediatric health care providers to utilize all child health care encounters to screen and, when indicated, immunize children.
8. Collaborate with other organizations to increase public and professional awareness of the

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importance of immunizations for overall child health.

In summary, NAPNAP recognizes the immense benefits of immunizations and encourages PNPs to assess immunization needs, implement and support immunization programs, and promote community awareness of the value of comprehensive immunization programs. It is the position of NAPNAP that there be federal, state, and local legislation on and funding for comprehensive immunization delivery and educational programs, including a national immunization registry.

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