



## **Bremer County Board of Health Position Statement on Immunizations**

The Bremer County Board of Health strongly supports timely and complete immunization of all infants, children, adolescents, and adults throughout life to provide a lifetime of protection from vaccine preventable diseases.

Current evidence and research show that immunizations are essential to the primary prevention of disease from infancy through adulthood. In fact, the reduction and elimination of vaccine-preventable disease has been one of the great public health achievements in the United States.<sup>1</sup> To protect the health of the public, all individuals should be immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases according to the best and most current evidence outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

In the United States, current childhood immunization schedules can prevent approximately 42,000 deaths and 20 million cases of disease, with net savings of nearly \$14 billion in direct costs and \$69 billion in total societal costs.<sup>2</sup> Childhood immunization rates in Iowa have been rising, but there is still much room for improvement. According to the Iowa Immunization Program 2017 Annual Report, the 2-year old state immunization rate for the 4-3-1-3-3-1-4 series (4 DTaP, 3 Polio, 1 MMR, 3 Hib, 3 Hep B, 1 Varicella, 4 PCV by 24 months of age) was 70 percent. The adolescent, 13-15 year old, state immunization rate for the 3-1-2-1-2 (3 Hep B, 1 Meningococcal, 2 MMR, 1 Td or Tdap, 2 Varicella) was 60 percent. The average state immunization rate for HPV vaccine received by adolescent girls, ages 13-15, was 42 percent and for adolescent males ages 13-15, was 36 percent. The Iowa Immunization Program strives to meet the Healthy People 2020 Goal of 80 percent immunization rate for both children and adolescents.<sup>3</sup>

The Bremer County Board of Health supports Bremer County health care providers as leaders of evidence based practice for immunization and encourages the continued efforts to promote routine vaccinations from birth throughout adulthood to protect individuals, the community and to preserve herd immunity.

The Bremer County Board of Health recommends the following actions to providers and community members to promote a more comprehensive and integrated approach to immunizations across the lifespan to protect oneself and those who currently remain under-immunized or too immune-compromised to be vaccinated:

### Access

- Ensure access to timely immunizations for all children
- Encourage provider participation in the Vaccine for Children program

### Education

- Make strong recommendations to patients to be vaccinated and be ready to answer any questions

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<sup>1</sup> CDC. Ten Great Public Health Achievements---United States, 2001-2010. *MMWR* May 20, 2011 / 60(19);619-623

<sup>2</sup> Zhou, F., Shefer, A., Wenger, J., Messonnier, M., Wang, L., Lopez, A., . . . Rodewald, L. (2014). Economic Evaluation of the Routine Childhood Immunization Program in the United States, 2009. *Pediatrics*, 133(4). doi:10.1542/peds.2013-0698d

<sup>3</sup> Iowa Department of Public Health. (2018). *Iowa Immunization Program 2017 Annual Report*. Retrieved from <https://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/39/2017%20Annual%20Report%20Final%206-12-18%202.pdf>

- Refer parent or patient concerns to the physician in your office or your ‘Vaccine Champion’ and address concerns in a non-confrontational way
- Distribute the accurate and thorough CDC Vaccine Information Statements (VIS) for each recommended vaccine to parents and caregivers at every immunization encounter
- Empower parents and caregivers to critically evaluate vaccine information and misinformation
- Serve as immunization experts to your community

#### Practice Management

- Discuss with your team your practice’s vaccine communication plan so everyone is aware of their role in communication about the importance of vaccines and vaccine safety
- Consider every health care encounter as a means to review immunization records utilizing Iowa’s Immunization Registry Information System (IRIS)
- Incorporate changes in immunization policies, recommendations, and practices in their practice and community by remaining knowledgeable through educational programs, evidence based research, and peer reviewed journals
- Utilize best practices to increase vaccination rates such as: reminder or recall systems, provider prompts, standing orders, and scheduling return visits
- Utilize quality improvement principles to evaluate immunization practices to improve vaccination rates

#### Patient Safety

- Recommend that parents, caregivers, and other adults remain compliant with recommended immunizations for their age and risk group in order to protect children in their care
- Ensure adherence to immunization schedules by utilizing electronic health records, the state vaccine registry (IRIS), and recall systems
- Help the families of children who have debilitating sequelae after the administration of vaccines to access the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program to assist with their ongoing care
- Report adverse vaccine reactions to the Vaccine Adverse Reporting System

Immunizations are a safe and effective public health intervention which protects your family, friends, and the community.

#### Bremer County Board of Health

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