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Provider Alert

Help Kids' Safe Return to School: Get Caught Up on Recommended Vaccines July 21, 2021

Santa Barbara County Public Health Department wants to ensure that children return back to school safely, and encourage that they get caught up on vaccines that were missed over the last year. COVID-19 disrupted both in-person learning and routine well-child visits for many children over the last year. As a result, many children have fallen behind on receiving recommended vaccines. CDC's public sector vaccine ordering data show a 14% drop in 2020-2021 compared to 2019, and measles vaccine is down by more than 20%. Kids need to get caught up now so that they are protected as they go back to in-person learning. Catch-up vaccination will require efforts from healthcare systems, health care providers, schools, state and local governments, and families.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend every child continues to receive recommended vaccinations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Getting children and adolescents caught up with recommended vaccinations is the best way to protect them from a variety of [vaccine-preventable diseases](#). These diseases are extremely contagious and can be fatal, especially for babies and young children. In recent years, there have been outbreaks of these diseases, especially in communities with low vaccination rates.

Given the importance of routine vaccination and the need for the COVID-19 vaccines for ages 12+, the AAP supports co-administration of routine childhood and adolescent immunizations with COVID-19 vaccines (or vaccination in the days before or after) for children and adolescents who are behind on or due for immunizations (based on the CDC/AAP Recommended Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule) and/or at increased risk from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Call to Action:

- Children need their vaccinations NOW, before the first day of school or they may not be able to attend
- Identify and prioritize children who are due or overdue for recommended vaccines and contact families to schedule appointments

- Remind all families of the importance of recommended vaccines as children return to in-person school.
- Let families know what precautions are in place for safe delivery of in-person services
- Encourage co-administration of vaccinations
- Communicate the importance of COVID-19 vaccination for those 12+ before the start of school to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 variant
- Enroll as a COVID-19 vaccine provider and be ready for the authorization of vaccine for children 3-11. Families will depend on your readiness when that time comes!
- \$10,000 CalVax Block Grant available for eligible COVID Vaccine providers enrolling through myCAvax. The grant is funded through the CDPH and supported by the CMA. Eligibility information is located at calvaxgrant.org. To contact the CMA via email, calvaxgrant@phcdocs.org or call (916)551-2565.

Help us protect children by doing what you can to get kids caught up on recommended vaccines!

Santa Barbara Health Department Website: <http://www.countyofsb.org/phd/>