



State of Louisiana

Department of Health
Office of Public Health

Subject: CALL-TO-ACTION

The COVID-19 pandemic caused major interruptions in childhood vaccinations throughout the county, beginning in Mid-March of 2020. Although vaccination of children has begun to increase since then, significantly fewer vaccines are being ordered by clinics compared to last year at this time. The reduction in the ordering of measles containing vaccine (either MMR or MMRV) and HPV vaccines has been especially concerning to health officials. Data suggests that children with private insurance have begun to return for vaccinations at a faster pace than children who have Medicaid or who are uninsured or underinsured (those children eligible for the Vaccines for Children Program).

Children not getting caught-up on their routine vaccinations are more susceptible to vaccine-preventable diseases. There is an urgent need for all of us to work together to get children back into their health care providers' office for well child visits and to receive any vaccine doses that were missed earlier this year. If we do not take action now, we can expect childhood vaccine coverage to drop to unacceptable levels. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is strongly recommending healthcare systems and healthcare providers do the following:

- Identify families whose children have missed doses and contact them to schedule appointments.
- Prompt clinicians when these children are seen to deliver vaccines that are due or overdue.
- Let families know what precautions are in place for safe delivery of in-person vaccination services.

Healthcare provider organizations can help by:

- Encouraging their members to identify and follow up with families whose children have missed doses to get appointments scheduled.

The Louisiana Department of Health's Office of Public Health is working with multiple partners, including the Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Louisiana Immunization Alliance, to promote routine vaccinations during the COVID-19 pandemic, through various activities. One important effort is a "Back to the Office" campaign provider resource toolkit (<https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3955>) that was updated and provided to childhood vaccination providers this week.

Together, both providers and parents we can make real strides in increasing the number of Louisiana children getting caught-up on their routine vaccinations. For more information on childhood vaccinations please go to <https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/subhome/61>.