



Immunization Update 101 | 3.9.23

Question of the Week

Who developed the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine?



March is Woman's History Month, and the Immunization Program is recognizing Kizzmekia Corbett, an American viral immunologist who is chiefly responsible for the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.



Known as "Kizzy," Corbett was appointed to the Vaccine Research Center (VRC) in 2014. At the onset of the pandemic, she joined VRC's COVID-19 team and started working on a vaccine to protect people from coronavirus disease.

Recognizing that the virus was similar to severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus, Corbett's team utilized previous knowledge of optimal coronavirus proteins to tackle COVID-19. Based on her previous research, Corbett's team, in collaboration with Jason McLellan and other investigators at The University of Texas at Austin, transplanted stabilized mutations from SARS-CoV S protein into SARS-CoV-2 spike protein.

In addition, her prior research suggested that messenger RNA (mRNA) encoding S protein could be used to excite the immune response to produce protective antibodies against coronavirus.

In December 2020, Dr. Anthony Fauci said, "Kizzy is an African American scientist who is right at the forefront of the development of the vaccine." In a profile in *Time* magazine, Fauci wrote, "Corbett has been central to the development of the Moderna mRNA vaccine. Her work will have a substantial impact on ending the worst respiratory-disease pandemic in more than 100 years."

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has issued a Health Alert Network (HAN) Health Advisory to notify clinicians and public health officials about a confirmed measles case at a large gathering.

On February 24, 2023, the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH) identified a confirmed case of measles in an unvaccinated individual with a history of recent international travel.



While infectious, the individual attended a sizable religious gathering on February 17–18, 2023, at Asbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky. An estimated 20,000 people attended the gathering from Kentucky, including individuals from other U.S. states and other countries, and an undetermined number of these people may have been exposed.

This Health Advisory also highlights other recent large global measles outbreaks and associated U.S. importations, as well as the importance of early recognition, diagnosis and appropriate treatment. CDC recommends clinicians be alert for measles cases that meet the [case definition](#).

View CDC Health Alert [here](#).

Bivalent booster and COVID-19 treatment options webinar

Today, **Thursday, March 9, 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.**, the Louisiana Community Engagement Alliance Against COVID-19 (LA-CEAL) will host a town hall session on the bivalent booster and COVID-19 Treatment Options. This interactive discussion will feature Tulane infectious disease physician Dr. David Mushatt, who will discuss the development of the new bivalent booster along with suggested COVID-19 treatment options for adults. Dr. John Schieffelin, Tulane Pediatric Infectious Disease physician, will also be present to discuss the importance of children receiving the COVID-19 vaccine along with COVID-19 treatment options for children.

In addition, Dr. John Schieffelin, Tulane pediatric infectious disease physician, will discuss the importance of COVID-19 treatment options for children.

Register [here](#).

View flier [here](#).

The Louisiana Community Engagement Alliance Against COVID-19 Disparities (LA-CEAL) Presents Town Hall Series on:

Bivalent Booster and COVID-19 Treatment Options

This interactive discussion will feature Tulane Infectious Disease Physician, Dr. David Mushatt, who will discuss the development of the new bivalent booster along with suggested COVID-19 treatment options for adults. Dr. John Schieffelin, Tulane Pediatric Infectious Disease physician, will also be present to discuss the importance of children receiving the COVID-19 vaccine along with COVID-19 treatment options for children.

David Mushatt, MD, MPH&TM
Tulane University
Featured Speaker





John S. Schieffelin, MD, MSPH
Tulane University
Featured Speaker

Co-Principal Investigators Dr. M. Tonette Krousel-Wood and Dr. LaKeisha Williams will be moderating the session.

Thursday, March 9th, 2022 5:30pm-6:30pm

Please [click here](#) to complete our registration and pre-session survey. The information you provide in the survey will help us to tailor the session to make it most useful for our audience.

[Click here to join the session!](#)

Survey looks at trust in local, state and national public health agencies



A survey published this week in the journal *Health Affairs* examines people's trust in health agencies and officials. According to the [article](#) about the survey, public health agencies' ability to protect health in the wake of COVID-19 largely depends on public trust.

The survey of 4,208 U.S. adults was conducted in February 2022 to learn the public's reasons for trust in federal, state and local public health agencies.

Among respondents who expressed a “great deal” of trust, that trust was related primarily to beliefs that public health agencies made clear, science-based recommendations and provided protective resources.

The survey found that, “Scientific expertise was a more commonly reported reason for a *great deal of trust* at the federal level, whereas perceptions of hard work, compassionate policy and direct services were emphasized more at the state and local levels.”

Although trust in public health agencies was not exceptionally high, a few respondents indicated they had no trust. Lower trust was related primarily to respondents' beliefs that *health recommendations were politically influenced and inconsistent*. The least trusting respondents also endorsed concerns about private-sector influence and excessive restrictions and had low trust in government overall.

The survey results suggest the need to support a robust federal, state and local public health communications infrastructure; ensure agencies' authority to make science-based recommendations; and develop strategies for engaging different segments of the public.

Protect tomorrow's babies

CDC has created a comprehensive toolkit intended to help prenatal care providers increase maternal immunization rates. Ob-gyns, nurse-midwives and other healthcare professionals who serve pregnant women can all use this toolkit. The resources include recommendations from CDC and further relevant details about vaccinating pregnant women.

[Toolkit for Prenatal Care Providers](#)



Week 8 FluView report

Seasonal influenza is steadily declining in Louisiana but remains a threat; keep encouraging vaccination. Click below for key points summarizing FluView data and other relevant flu-related information.

In Louisiana during Week 8:

- 1.5% of patient visits reported through the U.S. Outpatient Influenza-like

Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) were due to influenza-like illness (ILI).

- This percentage is **below the regional baseline** of 3.9%.
- The ILI case definition changed starting with the 2021–2022 season: fever >100.3 AND cough and/or sore throat.

FluView Report Week 8



The Vax Matters podcast: Vaccines and fertility



Tune in to the OPH Immunization Program's Vax Matters podcast to hear about ways to be immune from vaccine misinformation. The podcast is now easier than ever to find; instead of having to search podcast sites, Vax Matters can now be found on the Louisiana Department of Health's (LDH's) YouTube channel. Click [here to subscribe](#) and be notified when new episodes have been uploaded.

How do vaccines affect fertility? You may already have an opinion, but Vax Matters will give you the facts. Tune in to this episode as we explore vaccines and their effect on fertility. We are joined by Dr. Veronica Gillispie-Bell, a board-certified obstetrician and gynecologist and head of Women's Services at Ochsner Medical Center in Kenner, La.

Jump to the episode [here](#).

Be sure to like, comment and share your favorite episodes of the Vax Matters podcast and be a part of the 1000+ listens nationwide.

Vax Matters is now expanding to include topics other than vaccines. If you are interested in being a guest on Vax Matters, send a note to Jourdan Barnes at jourdan.barnes@la.gov. Include your contact information and the subject you would like to discuss.



Medicaid eligibility is changing. Help your patients maintain their coverage.



In a recent message, Medicaid Executive Director Tara LeBlanc explained how her program is preparing for the end of continuous Medicaid coverage that coincides with the end of the federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.

LeBlanc wrote, “Beginning in April, a Medicaid member could lose their health insurance coverage even if they are eligible if they do not respond to letters they received in the mail. These letters will direct members to verify their contact information, including cell phone numbers and email addresses.”

Healthcare providers are asked to help spread the word about this eligibility requirement. In addition, your Medicaid patients should go to <https://ldh.la.gov/page/4454> for a list of ways to make contact information updates.

Please remind your patients about the importance of reading and responding to mail from Medicaid. Thank you for helping to spread the word about this critical issue.

CDC provides update about H5 bird flu in the U.S.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspective Service continues to report detections of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) “bird flu” viruses in commercial poultry, backyard flocks and wild birds.

As of March 1, 2023, HPAI bird flu viruses have been found in wild birds in 50 states and in commercial and backyard poultry in 47 states.

Most importantly, there have not been any cases of bird flu reported in the U.S. since April 2022. Additionally, no person-to-person spread has been identified associated

with any bird flu viruses detected in other countries.

According to CDC, bird flu viruses detected in poultry and wild birds in the United States are believed to pose a low risk to the health of the general public; however, people who have job-related or recreational exposures to infected birds might be at higher risk of H5N1 virus infection and should take appropriate precautions outlined in CDC guidance.



“Improving the Vaccination Experience: Reducing Pain and Anxiety for Children and Adults”



On February 28, Immunize.org and Canadian experts from the Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), Toronto, and Society for Infodemic Management, Québec, hosted a one-hour webinar, [Improving the Vaccination Experience: Reducing Pain and Anxiety for Children and Adults](#).

During this webinar, participants learned more about vaccination pain and anxiety principles and simple, evidence-based strategies to reduce apprehension. The experts developed these strategies from [HELP Eliminate Pain in Kids and Adults](#). Their work was used by the World Health Organization (WHO), Public Health Canada, and others to develop guidelines for reducing vaccination pain.

The webinar video, slide set and links to other resources are now [available on the Immunize.org website for on-demand viewing](#). Please view and share this important webinar with your colleagues.

Was IZ Newsletter Issue 101 informative?

Yes

No

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