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## Department of Health Services

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To: Wisconsin Physicians, Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Pharmacists, Long Term Care Facility Directors, and Local Health Departments

From: Jeffrey P. Davis, MD, Chief Medical Officer and State Epidemiologist for Communicable Diseases and Emergency Response

Re: Standards for Adult Immunization Practice

To increase vaccination rates among adults we are providing the attached *Recommendations from the National Vaccine Advisory Committee: Standards for Adult Immunization Practice* that describes the roles and responsibilities for all providers who see adult patients. This article may also be found at: <http://www.publichealthreports.org/issueopen.cfm?articleID=3145>.

As noted in this document “Every health-care provider, in all settings, has a fundamental responsibility to ensure that all patients are up-to-date with respect to recommended immunizations.” We recognize that this document is lengthy but it provides a comprehensive statement regarding current barriers to adult immunization and a revised set of standards to help overcome them.

Most importantly, this document provides an important Figure, which is the Summary of the 2013 National Vaccine Advisory Committee’s (NVAC) standards for adult immunization practices. This includes standards for non-immunizing providers, immunizing providers, professional healthcare-related organizations/associations/healthcare-systems, and public health departments plus standards that apply to all of these groups.

Application of these Standards will be important throughout Wisconsin. Adults, as compared to children, are vastly under-immunized. Vaccination coverage rates among Wisconsin adults have remained consistently low for many years. The rate of influenza vaccination among persons aged  $\geq 18$  years during the 2012-2013 influenza season was 36.5%. Furthermore, only 40.5% of adults aged  $\geq 18$  years have received a tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine and 31.1% of persons aged 18-64 years with a high risk condition have received pneumococcal vaccination. We know we can do better in Wisconsin. But we must understand the obstacles to adult immunization and how to overcome them to improve our immunization rates for all adult vaccines. We need your help.

The importance of provider recommendation for vaccination has been demonstrated repeatedly. Indeed, most adult patients are willing to receive a vaccine when it is recommended by their provider. Important in this process are other approaches that have been demonstrated to increase vaccination coverage (e.g., reminder/recall systems, use of standing orders and protocols, reducing patient out-of-pocket costs, promoting vaccination services and others). Also important is the use of revised Standards that are sensitive to recent changes and enhancements in providing vaccines and tracking their administration, and recognize barriers to adult immunization and provide guidance to overcoming

them. We encourage you to adopt the *Standards for Adult Immunization Practice* in your own practice to increase uptake of adult vaccines in Wisconsin.

The *Standards for Adult Immunization Practice* guidance document describes the four steps that every provider should be taking to encourage their adult patients to get vaccinated:

1. Screen adult patients for vaccination status during each visit.
2. Recommend the needed vaccines to patients during each visit.
3. Administer the needed vaccines, or refer the patient to a provider who is able to vaccinate.
4. Document the vaccination in the patient's medical record and submit this information to the Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR).

Resources to help implement these recommendations are available from a variety of sources. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed materials and resources to help providers implement the standards, including information sheets that can be distributed to patients, provider scripts for talking about immunizations with adult patients, and many others. These resources can be found at the following link: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/adults/for-practice/standards.html>.

Other resources available include:

- Summary of Recommendations for Adult Immunization  
<http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2011.pdf>
- Adult Immunization Schedule  
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/adult/adult-pocket-size.pdf>

The *Standards for Adult Immunization Practice* is supported by a variety of national medical organizations, including the American Academy of Family Physicians and the American College of Physicians, and public health organizations such as the National Association of City and County Health Officials and the Association of Immunization Managers.

If you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact Stephanie Borchardt at 608-266-9923 or [Stephanie.Borchardt@wi.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Borchardt@wi.gov).

Your efforts in improving the health of Wisconsin's residents are greatly appreciated. Please make adult immunization a priority even if you do not provide vaccination services in your office.