BACKGROUND

In 2007 the Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) collaborated with primary care providers, health insurance providers, and the Ocean State Adult Immunization Coalition (OSAIC) to establish an Adult Immunization Program. The program aims to increase adult vaccination coverage rates by reducing barriers to vaccination. Public and private insurers provide funding through the program for the purchase and distribution of vaccine to healthcare providers for insured adults. Providers receive vaccine for free and bill insurers for vaccine administration costs. The program offers influenza, pneumococcal, and Tdap vaccines. Federal funds are used to purchase vaccine for uninsured and underinsured adults through special adult immunization initiatives (see page two). Rhode Island is the first state to centralize the distribution of adult vaccines and to implement universal adult vaccination policies. The program has been recognized for its innovation and has received:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)’s Immunization Excellence Award in 2008.
- The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)’s 2008 Vision Award.
- The Association of Immunization Managers Bull’s-Eye Award for Innovation and Excellence in Immunization.
- Acknowledgement in 2010 American Lung Association’s report Missed Opportunities: Influenza and Pneumonia Vaccination in Older Adults

ADULT VACCINATION COVERAGE RATES

INFLUENZA VACCINE

In February 2010, the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) expanded recommendations for annual influenza vaccination to include everyone 6 months of age and older. Certain people are at higher risk for influenza complications, including those 65 years of age and older, infants younger than 6 months of age, pregnant women, and people of any age with chronic medical conditions. Healthcare workers, close contacts and caretakers of people with chronic illnesses, and infants are considered vaccination priorities because of how readily they can transmit the illness. The Healthy People 2020 goal for influenza coverage in priority groups is 90%. Figure 1 shows influenza vaccination trends among adults 65 years of age and older and Figure 2 shows the influenza vaccination coverage rate for all adults 18 years of age and older during the 2009-2010 influenza season. Coverage among pregnant women in Rhode Island increased from 30% in 2005 to 66.8% during the 2009-2010 influenza season (Figure 3). Despite progress, influenza coverage rates remain well below Healthy People 2020 goals.

ADULT IMMUNIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS

ROUTINE VACCINE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Influenza vaccine: 1 dose annually for all adults
- Tdap (tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis) vaccine: a single dose for all adults followed by a Td booster every 10 years
- Varicella (chickenpox) vaccine: 2 doses for adults who lack evidence of immunity
- HPV (human papilloma virus) vaccine: 3 doses for women 26 years of age or younger (Gardasil can be given to men age 26 years or younger to prevent genital warts)
- Zoster (shingles) vaccine: 1 dose for adults 60 years of age and older
- MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine: 1 or 2 doses (depending on age) for adults who lack evidence of immunity
- Pneumococcal vaccine: 1 dose for adults 65 years and older

VACCINES RECOMMENDED FOR HIGH-RISK ADULTS:

- Pneumococcal vaccine: 1 or 2 doses for adults 19 to 64 years of age
- Meningococcal vaccine: 1 or more doses for adults 19 years and older
- Hepatitis B vaccine: 3 doses for adults 19 years and older
- Hepatitis A vaccine: 2 doses for adults 19 years and older
PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINE
The ACIP recommends 1-2 doses of pneumococcal vaccine for adults 19 through 64 years of age if they smoke or have certain chronic medical conditions and 1 dose for people 65 years of age and older if they have never been vaccinated against the illness. The Healthy People 2020 objective for coverage of adults 65 years of age and older is 90%. Figure 4, below, compares Rhode Island and US trends.

IMPROVING ADULT IMMUNIZATION RATES

WHAT IS HEALTH DOING?
1. Partners with OSAIC to identify and develop programs to address vaccination disparities and unmet vaccination needs among adults.
2. Supports free immunization clinics for uninsured adults without primary care providers.
3. Collaborates with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to streamline billing and reimbursement systems.
4. Recruits new vaccine providers (pharmacies and specialists, for example) to expand vaccine accessibility.
5. Partners with Rhode Island colleges and universities to improve influenza uptake among students and faculty.
6. Amending college immunization regulations to reflect new ACIP standards for Tdap and meningococcal vaccines.
7. Partners with OSAIC to increase influenza vaccination rates among healthcare workers.
8. Educates the public and providers about vaccination.
9. Expanding quality assurance activities to monitor and educate adult vaccine providers on vaccine management.
10. Planning enhancements to KIDSNET’s to build an adult immunization registry.
11. Provides vaccine and schedule updates through HEALTH’s Provider Briefing.

WHAT SHOULD HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS DO?
1. Follow the CDC’s Adult Immunization Schedule in assessing vaccination status and vaccinate according to age and the health risks patients face.
2. Make it standard practice to review patients’ immunization histories and offer vaccines during medical encounters, such as cancer screenings and prenatal visits.
4. Implement electronic medical records systems.
5. Reduce transmission of disease and set an example by complying with immunization recommendations. This includes being vaccinated against the flu annually.