



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

Tony Evers, Governor
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

September 21, 2021

Michael Queensland
Senate Chief Clerk
Room B20 Southeast, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53701

Edward Blazel
Assembly Chief Clerk
17 West Main Street, Room 401
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Mr. Queensland and Mr. Blazel:

I am pleased to submit to the Legislature the enclosed report for CY2020 as required by Wis. Stat. 252.04(11) on the success of the statewide immunization program. The report includes updates on: school immunization rates; preschool-age children immunization estimates; adolescent immunization estimates; vaccine preventable disease response – including COVID-19; and updates on the Wisconsin Immunization Registry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen E. Timberlake".

Karen E. Timberlake
Secretary-designee

Enclosure



Report on the Success of the Statewide Immunization Program during CY 2020
Department of Health Services

Wisconsin Statute § 252.04 (11) directs the Department of Health Services to submit an annual report to the Legislature on the success of the statewide immunization program.

School immunization rates

Chapter DHS 144 requires students to receive a minimum number of immunizations, be in the process of receiving those immunizations, or have a signed waiver in order to attend school and be in compliance with the law. Every fall, schools are required to report the aggregate number of students who have met the minimum immunization requirements, are in the process of meeting the requirements, are behind schedule, have a waiver, or have no immunization record or waiver on file.

For the 2020-21 school year, 2,522 schools reported information on 849,164 students (11.5% fewer schools reported as compared to the previous year).

- During the 2020-21 school year, 91.9% of students met the minimum immunization requirements, compared to 91.7% the previous year.
- The percentage of students with a waiver (personal conviction, religious, or medical) for one or more immunizations increased from 1.6% during the 1997-98 school year to 5.0% during the 2020-21 school year.
 - The percentages of students with religious and medical waivers have remained relatively constant, but the percentage of students with a personal conviction waiver increased from 1.2% during the 1997-98 school year to 4.3% during 2020-21.
- During the 2020-21 school year, 2.9% of students were behind schedule, compared to 1.8% the previous year.
- Only 1.0% of students had waived all immunizations during 2020-21 school year, compared to 1.2% last school year.

Preschool-age children immunization estimates

Estimates of immunization levels among Wisconsin preschool-age children (24 months of age) are determined using the Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR). A child's primary immunization series includes: 4 DTaP; 3 polio; 1 MMR; ≥ 3 *Haemophilus influenzae* Type B; 3 hepatitis B; 1 varicella; and 4 pneumococcal conjugate vaccine doses.

- The percentage of preschool-age children who completed the primary series for 2020 was 69.9%, compared to 72.1% during 2019.

Adolescent immunization estimates

CY20 immunization activities also included those specific to adolescents aged 13 through 18 years. The adolescent vaccine platform includes HPV, MCV4, and Tdap.

The following represent coverage rates for adolescents using WIR data:

- ≥ 1 HPV (60.0%) compared to 59.3% during the previous year, HPV Complete* (47.3%) compared to 46.0% during the previous year
- ≥ 1 MCV4 (72.6%) compared to 73.0% during the previous year, MCV4 up to date** (47.1%) compared to 48.6% during the previous year
- ≥ 1 Tdap (78.1%) compared to 79.0% during the previous year

Vaccine Preventable Disease Response

COVID-19

During 2020, the incidence of COVID-19 steadily increased. The Department of Health Services stood up an incident command team, the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force, to plan for and implement our statewide COVID-19 vaccination campaign. DHS developed a COVID-19 vaccination plan during October 2020. Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines received FDA emergency use authorization during December 2020, and front line health care personnel were among the first group prioritized for vaccination.

Influenza

Overall, the percentage of residents receiving influenza immunization was 41%. Vaccination rates increased among persons aged 50 years and above when compared to the previous influenza season though rates decreased for every other age group. Influenza disease and hospitalization rates were remarkably lower than previous seasons as a result of COVID-19 mitigation measures, including school closures, physical distancing and mask usage.

Measles

There have been no measles cases in Wisconsin residents since 2014. However, MMR vaccination coverage among persons aged 24 months has steadily declined from 88.2% during 2013 to 83.6% during 2020. Population immunity of greater than 95% is needed to prevent a measles outbreak. Statewide outreach is underway to encourage families to resume well-child visits delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic and pursue catch up vaccination.

*HPV Complete: Represents either a two or three-dose series depending on age at vaccine series initiation.

**MCV4 up to date: Includes only clients 17-18 years old. Clients are considered up to date (UTD) if they have received a meningococcal ACWY dose prior to age 16 years and a booster dose at or after 16 years or if they received one meningococcal ACWY dose at or after age 16 years.

Administrative Rules

In 2020, DHS continued the administrative rules process for proposed updates to Administrative Code Chapters DHS 144 (Student Immunizations) and 146 (Vaccine-Preventable Diseases). With regards to DHS 146, the proposed rule updated the list of vaccines which the Division of Public Health may make available, free of charge, to eligible individuals through local health departments and tribal health clinics, as well as health care providers throughout the state who participate in the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program. The administrative rule promulgation process was completed; the updated rule was published with an effective date of 4.1.20.

Proposed updates to DHS 144, which includes the minimum immunization requirements for entry into Wisconsin schools and child care centers, were also submitted to the legislature in 2019; the proposed modifications to DHS 144 would bring Wisconsin school immunization requirements in line with surrounding Midwestern states. Significant portions of the proposed updates to Chapter DHS 144 were objected to by two committees in the legislature in the early part of 2020. The Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules (JCRAR) objected to parts of the rule on May 5, 2020, and introduced 2021 AB 12 and 2021 SB 35 to prohibit promulgation of those portions of the rule. In accordance with s. 227.19 (5) (c), Stats., the Department intends to promulgate all unobjected-to portions of the proposed rule, and is working with the Legislative Reference Bureau and Legislative Council to produce rule text that incorporates the unobjected-to portions of the proposed rule order.

Wisconsin Immunization Registry

The Wisconsin Immunization Registry, also called WIR, is an internet database that tracks vaccine records for Wisconsin children and adults. It helps providers track patients who visit multiple clinics, forecasts what immunizations a patient needs, and can run reports that measure a clinic's vaccine rates. It also allows patients, parents, and child guardians to view their vaccine record and keep track of their vaccines.

- **Number of records:** WIR contains more than 9.9 million client records with 122 million associated immunizations in the system. Each day, approximately 15,272 vaccine administration records are added to WIR.
- **Active users:** WIR currently has 15,939 active users. This number includes 2,555 schools and school districts, all of which have the ability to enter data into WIR. The count of active users does not include those who enter the system through an electronic health record (EHR) or electronic medical record (EMR) with a real-time interface with WIR.
- **Utilization:** There was an average of 63,648 instances per month of individuals accessing their (or their children's) immunization record during 2020, with a peak of 108,815 during September 2020.
- **State collaborations on system upgrades:** Sharing of code to upgrade state immunization registries has benefited multiple states using the WIR platform.

- **Improvements to the WIR:** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of changes to the WIR were completed, including updates to the vaccine schedule, reporting functionality and the ordering module to accommodate COVID-19 vaccine. Additionally, the mass vaccination module was updated to include race and ethnicity.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic response, the WIR saw a significant increase in usage. Over 2,000 immunizers registered as COVID-19 providers; all were required to report doses to the WIR within 24 hours of administration. At the peak, 92,507 doses were administered in a single day (April 1, 2021). As of June 10, 2021, over 5.6 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine had been administered and reported to the WIR.