

AAP: HHS action on pharmacy vaccination ‘misguided’

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Federal officials invoked public health emergency authority to preempt state law on pharmacist administration of vaccines to children, a move the AAP says is “incredibly misguided.”

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) said it is allowing state-licensed pharmacists to administer vaccines to children ages 3-18 years to increase access and **improve vaccination rates**, which have dropped during the pandemic. Many states currently restrict pharmacists from administering vaccines to children of any age or limit the age range or type of vaccine that can be administered by a pharmacist.

“This unprecedented expansion of pharmacies’ ability to administer vaccines to children is not a solution to the vaccine hesitancy that is driving down rates of childhood immunizations in the U.S.,” said AAP President Sara “Sally” H. Goza. “Many parents have questions about their children’s vaccines, and pediatricians are ready to talk with them. It’s what we do, every day, one-on-one with thousands of parents, as part of the long-term trusting relationships that families have with their physicians.

“In the middle of a pandemic, what families are looking for is reassurance and clinical guidance from the doctors they trust most to care for their children: pediatricians,” Dr. Goza said in a **news release**.

“Pediatricians’ offices are open and safe. We have all the necessary childhood vaccines in stock with trained medical professionals who can administer them. We know that the best, safest place for children to get vaccinated is in their medical home.”

The AAP believes children should receive vaccines with a pediatrician who knows their medical history and who can simultaneously provide services like developmental and mental health screenings, counseling about nutrition and injury prevention, and chronic disease management.

In addition, few pharmacies participate in the Vaccines for Children program, which provides free vaccines to children who are low-income, uninsured, American Indian or Alaska Native. The move also supersedes states' own restrictions on pharmacists vaccinating children.

Clinicians should reach out to patients about scheduling well-child visits and catching up on vaccines, especially as children return to school. The AAP has released guidance on conducting well-child visits during the COVID-19 pandemic at <https://bit.ly/AAPWellChild>.

Resources

- [CDC immunization schedules](#)
- [AAP clinical report "Countering Vaccine Hesitancy"](#)
- [Information for parents from HealthyChildren.org on seeing a pediatrician during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [AAP immunization resources](#)
- [AAP's #CallYourPediatrician campaign](#)

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