

George Latimer County Executive

Sherlita Amler, M.D.  
Commissioner of Health

April 4, 2023

Re: **National Adolescent Immunization Action Week April 3-7, 2023**

Dear Colleague,

Physicians and healthcare providers are a parent's most trusted resource when it comes to vaccines. You play a critical role in supporting parents in understanding and choosing vaccinations. That's why during National Adolescent Immunization Action Week, I urge you to encourage your patients' parents to keep their children up to date with their vaccinations for HPV, Meningitis (required for 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders), Tdap (required for 6<sup>th</sup> graders), flu and Covid-19.

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection. Every year, about 13 million Americans, including teens, become newly infected with HPV. As you know, the HPV vaccine prevents transmission of the Human Papillomavirus, which causes six types of cancer, including cervical cancer and cancer of the vulva, vagina, penis, anus and oropharyngeal cancer.

In order to increase the number of children who complete the two-dose HPV vaccination series by age 13, the Westchester County Health Department supports the ["Start at Nine" Campaign](#) which encourages parents, caregivers and providers to initiate the HPV vaccine series for children at age nine. Starting this vaccine at age nine is the right thing to do because it provides our children with the most effective lifetime protection to prevent these cancers. Pre-teens produce more antibodies to fight infection after they receive the vaccine than any other age group. Getting an earlier start should assure more children are protected.

The "Start at Nine" campaign is led by the American Cancer Society. Starting at 9 is consistent with the recommended schedule of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the federal Centers for Disease Control. Evidence suggests that starting at 9 rather than 11, which had been more common, increases the number of children who have completed the two-dose vaccination by age 13. Less than 40 percent of eligible children in New York complete the vaccine, which is not required for school. Older teenagers and adults who did not receive the two-dose HPV vaccine by age 14 may still catch up with a three-dose series before age 45.

Another way you can help your patients is to encourage their parents and caregivers to ask their own providers about what vaccines are right for them and to encourage them to participate in the New York State Immunization Information System (NYSIIS).

Visit the NYSDOH website for recommendations, free downloads, patient education and training opportunities:  
[www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/providers/](http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/providers/)



Find what you need to have a successful vaccination conversation with parents at the CDC website:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/conversations>

**Parent Friendly Version Immunization Schedule**

- Children from Birth - 6 Years Old 2023 Schedule
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/parent-ver-sch-0-6yrs.pdf>
- Children 7 - 18 Years old 2023 Schedule
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/teen/parent-version-schedule-7-18yrs.pdf>

For more information on immunizations, please contact the Westchester County Department of Health Immunization Action Program at (914) 813-7388. For help with your NYSIIS account, contact the NYSIIS Help Desk at 1-866-389-0371 or [NYSIIShelpdesk@gainwelltechnologies.com](mailto:NYSIIShelpdesk@gainwelltechnologies.com).

You are an important partner in immunizing adolescents and educating parents and families about the importance of vaccines, and I thank you for your efforts on behalf of Westchester families.

Sincerely;



Sherlita Amler, MD, MS, FAAP  
Commissioner of Health