



PROTECT YOUR PATIENTS DURING THE 2026-2027 RESPIRATORY VIRUS SEASON

Dear Massachusetts Healthcare Provider,

The 2026–2027 respiratory illness season is underway, and you play a critical role in protecting Massachusetts communities. The [Massachusetts Vaccine Confidence Project \(MVCP\)](#) is asking for your assistance in promoting immunizations to reduce disease across the state.

Cases of COVID-19, influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and pneumococcal disease are expected to increase, straining our healthcare system. Your role in promoting respiratory immunizations is key to protecting patients and easing that burden.

Recent data as of July 4, 2026 show a decline in respiratory vaccine uptake: During the 2025-2026 season, 13% of Massachusetts residents were vaccinated against COVID-19 and 39% were vaccinated against influenza, less than the previous season. This trend underscores the **urgent need for strong vaccine recommendations from trusted providers like you.**

Immunizations for COVID-19, influenza, RSV, and pneumococcal disease are crucial for those at higher risk, including young children, pregnant people, the immunocompromised, and older adults. Immunization remains one of the safest, most effective ways to prevent severe illness and hospitalization. To support your critical role this season, **we'd like to share tips and tools to help you promote respiratory disease vaccination with confidence:**

- Attend the [Respiratory Illness Season Update webinar](#) hosted by the Massachusetts Adult Immunization Coalition (MAIC) and the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MCAAP) on October 7, 2026 to equip yourself with strategies to prevent respiratory disease. The webinar recording and resources will be available on the MAIC and MCAAP websites.
- Give a strong vaccine recommendation after assessing your patient's immunization status. Be sure to discuss all recommended respiratory vaccines for the season. [Explore tips for talking about flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccines.](#)
- Implement standing orders to increase efficiency. They allow authorized healthcare personnel to assess immunization needs and administer vaccines without direct clinician involvement. [Use model standing orders for influenza and COVID-19 vaccination](#) from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH).

- Activate immunization reminder/recall to identify and notify patients who are behind on immunizations (recall) or due soon (reminder). [Check out the steps you can take](#) to set up reminder/recall for respiratory illness vaccines this season.
- Leverage local pharmacy partners to administer vaccinations. State-recommended vaccines can be administered by pharmacists, allowing for better access to vaccines across the state. If you can't stock certain vaccines at your practice, prescribe/e-prescribe to the pharmacy.

Thank you for protecting your patients and supporting efforts to reduce respiratory illness in Massachusetts this season. We know the environment is challenging, especially as providers navigate complex messaging and increasing disinformation. Nonetheless, your vaccination efforts remain essential to protecting both individuals and the broader community.

Pam Worthington

Pam Worthington

MA Department
of Public Health

Cynthia McReynolds

Cynthia McReynolds

MA Chapter,
American Academy of
Pediatrics

Rich Baker

Rich Baker

MA Adult Immunization
Coalition

