

September 23, 2025

Dear Colleagues,

As the Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), I am endorsing the recommendations of the Illinois Immunization Advisory Committee (IL-IAC), ensuring that Illinois residents have evidence-informed and science-based vaccine recommendations for the 2025-2026 fall respiratory season.

Accompanying these [recommendations](#), I have also signed a [standing order](#) that will allow residents the access they need to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

These actions follow Governor JB Pritzker's [executive order](#), issued on September 12, to protect life-saving immunization access for Illinoisians. IDPH's efforts today are the first public steps of the *Statewide Vaccine Access Initiative*, established by the Governor's Executive Order.

For the 2025-2026 fall and winter respiratory season, IDPH recommends the following:

- Flu vaccination is recommended for all people ages 6 months and older.
- RSV immunization is recommended for:
  - All pregnant people during weeks 32 through 36 of pregnancy.
  - All infants under the age of 8 months without maternal RSV vaccine protection entering their first RSV season.
  - Children ages 8 months through 19 months who are at increased [risk for severe RSV disease](#).
  - Adults ages 50 years through 74 years at increased [risk of severe RSV disease](#)
  - All adults ages 75 years and older.
- COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for:
  - All children ages 6 months through 23 months.
  - Children ages 2 years through 17 years who have at least one [underlying risk factor](#), who have weakened immune systems, who have never been previously vaccinated for COVID-19, who live in congregate settings or live in households with those at risk for severe COVID-19.
  - Children ages 2 years through 17 years without underlying risk factors whose parents/guardians want them to get a COVID-19 vaccine.
  - All pregnant people and those who are planning pregnancy, those who are postpartum (after pregnancy), or during lactation.
  - All adults 18 years and older.

These [recommendations](#) are the product of detailed review and analysis of Illinois and national data, guidance from national medical specialty societies, and review of other state, regional and federal recommendations. IDPH's recommendations align with those of the American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the American Academy of Family Physicians.

IDPH's recent actions – our recommendations, the process to develop them, and the corresponding standing order – are different than in years past, necessitated by the continued lack of credibility, transparency, and science-based decisions coming from the federal government. Last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) once again demonstrated that this previous gold-standard committee is no longer following the scientific processes necessary to ensure the public's health and safety. Even worse, the new membership appointed by the Secretary continues to cast doubt on the safety and effectiveness of established vaccines.

Today I want to reaffirm [statements I have made over the past several months](#) and throughout my career as a pediatrician and public health leader: **Vaccines save lives.** Vaccines protect communities. The vaccines we are recommending have been proven to be both safe and effective in preventing illness, reducing the severity of illness, and slowing the spread of seasonal illnesses.

Access to these vaccines can be life-saving for many, and that is why today's recommendations are linked to a [COVID-19 statewide standing order](#). While ACIP's actions in June 2025 secured insurance coverage and access to flu and RSV vaccines for those who are eligible, uncertainty remained about COVID-19 vaccines. IDPH's [standing order](#) will allow eligible health care providers in pharmacies and other clinical settings to administer COVID-19 vaccines in accordance with IDPH's recommendations. [Federal insurance programs, fully-insured plans subject to the Affordable Care Act](#), and [state-regulated insurance programs](#) will cover COVID-19 shots. Most private insurances have also [indicated their intention](#) to continue covering the COVID-19 vaccine, and we hope that is the case in Illinois.

ACIP's actions and discussions over the past few months are also placing at risk routine vaccinations for children and adults proven to be safe and effective. That is why, for routine, non-seasonal vaccines, IDPH is recommending that healthcare providers continue to follow the [child](#) and [adult](#) immunization schedules as updated by the CDC on August 7, 2025.

We also understand that science is not static. IDPH, in consultation with the IL-IAC, will review these schedules as appropriate, ensuring that we follow gold-standard scientific processes to protect our residents in the months and years to come.

Despite our actions today, we know that more work will need to be done. IDPH, in partnership with the *Statewide Vaccine Access Initiative*, remain committed to all of you – our healthcare providers, public health leaders, and residents in Illinois. We will continue to protect and promote scientific credibility and immunization access.

Thank you all for your commitment and partnership as IDPH works to make every corner of our state healthier.

Yours in good health,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sameer Vohra". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sameer Vohra, MD, JD, MA  
Director  
Illinois Department of Public Health