

# Vaccinations Are Important for All Texans

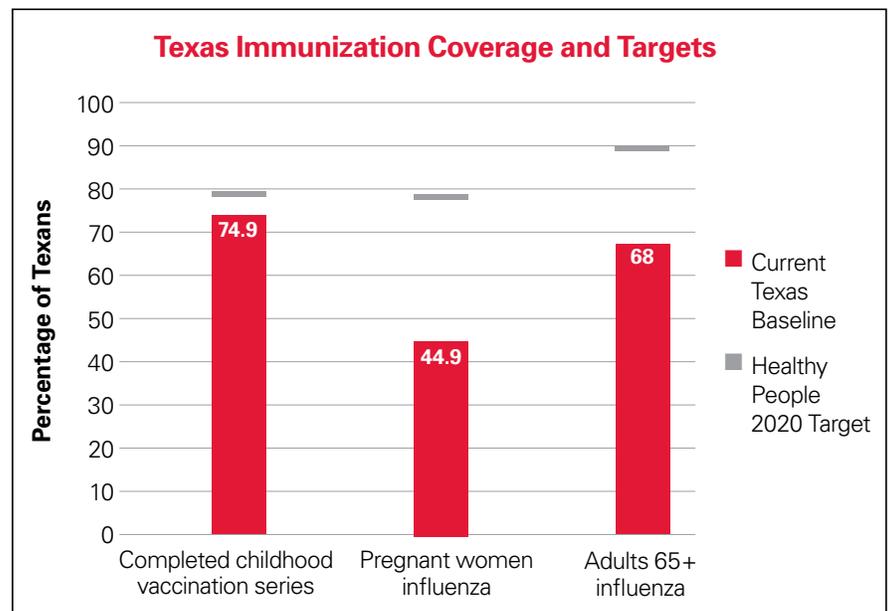
Texas understand that vaccines help ensure Texans don't get sick from a vaccine-preventable disease. Yet in 2011, almost 4,000 cases of vaccine-preventable infectious diseases were reported in Texas — about 90 percent of these were cases of chickenpox and pertussis. And while we saw fewer cases of pertussis in 2011, there were new outbreaks in 2012 that resulted in several infant and child deaths. New vaccines and new vaccination recommendations are developed each year — making it more important than ever that each Texan has a way to get vaccinated. Patients and their physician also must be able to monitor vaccinations through a strong immunization registry.

## 2013 IMMUNIZATION PRIORITIES

- ✓ Support the state's legislative appropriations request for immunizations, especially for the adult safety net.
- ✓ Amend the meningitis vaccination law to align more closely with Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommendations.
- ✓ Allow minor parents (who can consent to their child's vaccination) the ability to consent to their own vaccination.
- ✓ Support the ability of health care professionals to deduct the cost of purchasing vaccine from the state's margins tax.
- ✓ Support a statewide disease prevention and health quality initiative to improve vaccination rates among early-childhood care providers.
- ✓ Change ImmTrac, the state's immunization registry, to an opt-out system.
- ✓ Extend from 18 to 26 the age by which an adult patient must consent to stay in the registry.

## IMMUNIZATION IN TEXAS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- About 75 percent of Texas children 19-35 months are fully immunized<sup>1</sup> — higher than the national average.
- Legislation requiring most new higher education students to be vaccinated for meningococcal disease highlighted the need to ensure the uninsured and others can get timely vaccinations and participate in the state immunization registry. Aligning with recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices will minimize confusion among the public and health care professionals.
- With about 50,000 births to teen mothers in Texas each year, there are thousands of minors in Texas who can legally seek health care for their children but must still depend on a parent or other adult to consent for their own vaccinations.
- The incidence of pertussis among adolescents and young adults emphasizes the need to improve vaccination access for these high-risk populations. While Texas took a lead in ensuring most health care workers are appropriately vaccinated, parents are not assured that those caring for their young children are vaccinated. There are about 17,000 licensed and registered child care facilities in Texas with about 53,000 child care workers — but no state requirement for their vaccination.
- About 80 percent of the nation's children get some or all of their immunizations from private physicians' offices, which operate as businesses. With the addition of the state's margins tax to the growing number of vaccines, rising costs, and variable insurance payments — some physicians are reducing the number of vaccinations they administer because they can't recoup their costs, and in some cases, are paying a tax every time they vaccinate a patient.



1. CDC, National State, and Local Area Vaccination Coverage Among Children 19-35 months, *MMWR*, Sept. 7, 2012. [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/wk/mm6135.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/wk/mm6135.pdf).