



UNITY

United for adolescent vaccination

UNITY Consortium Established to Support Immunizations for Today's Teens and Young Adults

New nonprofit organization convenes diverse groups to improve health through prevention and immunization

NEWTOWN, Pa., August 27, 2015 – [UNITY Consortium](#) has launched as a coalition that brings together a wide range of organizations with a singular focus on improving adolescent and young adult health through prevention and immunization. Members represent public and private organizations, industry, academia, and advocacy groups, bringing expertise to create, support and promote initiatives to enable adolescents and young adults, parents and communities to live free from preventable diseases.

While immunization rates are high among young children, there is a drop in vaccination rates among adolescents and young adults ages 10 to 26. Unfortunately, there is a real risk of getting very sick and even dying without proper immunization, even for young, healthy people. According to the World Health Organization, 2.5 million people die each year from vaccine-preventable diseases.¹

The biggest barriers to adolescent and young adult immunization include parental lack of awareness of vaccine recommendations, lack of proper tracking of vaccination histories, parental consent issues, access to adolescents and young adults for preventative care visits, and reimbursement variations.

UNITY works to remove these barriers by helping make healthcare providers stronger advocates for adolescent vaccinations, engaging parents and adolescents and young adults to confidently embrace the importance of adolescent vaccination, and ensuring easy access to and timely delivery of CDC-recommended vaccines.

“The vision of UNITY is to ensure at least 90% of U.S. adolescents and young adults receive all vaccinations as recommended by the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices,” said Judy Klein, President of UNITY Consortium. “Adolescent and young adults face unique challenges to immunization, so the UNITY Consortium has been established to help navigate, educate and advocate for the urgency of adolescent and young adult vaccinations.”

¹http://www.who.int/immunization/global_vaccine_action_plan/GVAP_Introduction_and_Immunization_Landscape_Today.pdf

Adolescents and young adults have a recommended immunization schedule created by the CDC that includes four vaccines for young people between the ages of 10 and 26 – Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough), human papillomavirus (HPV), meningococcal, and the flu. Adolescents and young adults who do not stay up to date with vaccines could be at risk for serious illness and even death from these preventable diseases. In fact, 800 to 1,200 Americans get meningococcal meningitis each year, and of those, 10% to 15% will die from the disease.² Twenty-one percent of all meningococcal disease cases occur in adolescents and young adults.³ Additionally, there are 14 million new HPV infections each year, which are most common among people in their teens and early 20s.⁴ Nationwide, 40% of adolescent girls and 60% of adolescent boys remain unvaccinated against HPV.⁵ However, the HPV vaccine is most effective at preventing associated cancers when administered during the preteen years.⁶

Many parents are not aware of these recommended vaccinations, and many adolescents and young adults are not getting them. UNITY develops and supports initiatives that advance adolescent and young adult health and helps all stakeholders navigate, educate and advocate for the urgency of adolescent and young adult CDC-recommended vaccinations.

About UNITY Consortium

The UNITY Consortium is a non-profit organization that brings together diverse groups that share a common interest in adolescent health with a focus on prevention and immunization. Members represent public and private organizations, industry, academia and advocacy groups. By providing one strong voice in support of prevention and immunization, the UNITY Consortium focuses on addressing the unique challenges and barriers surrounding adolescent health. For more information, visit <http://www.unity4teenvax.org/>

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² Thigpen MC, Whitney CG, Messonnier NE, et al; Emerging Infections Programs Network. Bacterial meningitis in the United States, 1998-2007. *N Engl J Med.* 2011;364(21):2016-2025.

³ CDC. National and State Vaccination Coverage Among Adolescents Aged 13–17 Years — United States, 2013. *MMWR* 2014; 63(29):625-633. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6329a4.htm>.

⁴ Jemal A et al. *J Natl Cancer Inst* 2013;105:175-201

⁵ <http://www.cdc.gov/hpv/infographics/vacc-coverage.html>

⁶ <http://www.cdc.gov/hpv/vaccine.html>