

SHOTStracker



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If you would like more information about how you can participate in Florida SHOTS please contact

The Florida Department of Health Bureau of Immunization

Bin A-11, 4052 Bald Cypress Way
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1719
PHONE (877) 888-SHOT
FAX (850) 922-4195
E-MAIL flshots@DOH.state.fl.us



I-TRENDS

Boosting Immunization Levels with Reminders and Recalls

This article was excerpted from "Adoption of Reminder and Recall Messages for Immunizations by Pediatricians and Public Health Clinics," Pediatrics, Vol. 112, No. 5, November 2003, by Cheryl D. Tierney, MD, MPH, et. al.

OVERVIEW:

Strong scientific evidence and national recommendations support the use of reminder and recall messages to improve immunization coverage rates, yet reports have suggested that only a minority of pediatric practices use such messages. According to a 2002 national study, among pediatricians, 30% were conducting regular assessments of immunization coverage, but only 16% were currently using routine reminder or recall messages. Among public clinics, 85% were conducting regular assessments and 51% were using reminder or recall messages. Among pediatricians' practices, the most commonly reported barriers to the adoption of reminder or recall messages were lack of time and funding and the inability to identify children at specified ages. The study concluded that reminder and recall messages remain underused by both pediatricians and public health clinics.

Florida SHOTS will soon offer reminder/recall features to all providers!

Approximately 1 in 4 children aged 19 to 35 months has missed at least 1 recommended vaccine. Reminder and recall messages sent by mail or telephone have been found effective at increasing childhood immunization coverage rates in many settings, including private practices, academic centers, health maintenance organizations, and public health clinics. On the basis of this evidence, in 1999, the Task Force on Community Preventive Services strongly recommended that all practices implement reminder and recall messaging. In addition, both the National Vaccine Advisory Committee and the Task Force on Community Preventive Services have recommended routine immunization audits to

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Welcome Aboard!

We here at Florida SHOTS would like to wish a warm welcome to the 146 practices that enrolled during the months of November and December 2004. Here's what one recent enrollee has to say about Florida SHOTS:

"Initially, I had a lot of resistance from the staff because no one likes change; but now, they are all happy that we are enrolled in the registry. And I know that when August 2005 comes around and we are not writing out thousands of blue 680 forms required for school attendance, they will be really glad we have it," says Cathy Glidden, Nurse Practitioner, North Florida Pediatric Associates. "Additionally, the Tallahassee group that handles our Medicaid patients is also part of Florida SHOTS. Now that we are both online, it has really cut down on the time we used to spend sending patient immunization information back and forth."

Cathy offers the following strategy for entering patient records into the registry. "Although many of our patients were already registered in Florida SHOTS through the loading of Vital Statistics' birth records, we knew that it would take some time to get the remaining patients entered into the registry as well as update immunization histories for those who were already registered. Our first goal is to ensure that all of our patients younger than 18 months are in the system with updated immunization histories. The next phase will be to ensure that all 18 months to 5 year-old patient records are entered and updated, and our third group will be kids in fifth and sixth grades. Currently, we have about 1,000 patients in the registry."

She concludes: "Florida SHOTS has cut way down on our administrative time because once patients are entered, we only have to update their

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You Said It

It's always nice to know that others who walk daily in your professional shoes are finding benefits from being enrolled in this program. So each month we'll share with you what some of our users are saying about Florida SHOTS. This month's feature interview was conducted with Douglas Short, M.D., Assistant Director of Medical Education—Pediatrics, General Academic Pediatric Outpatient Center, Orlando Regional Hospital.

What do you think is the best feature of the registry for your office?

The ability to retrieve immunization records from the registry has been extremely valuable to our clinic, since many of our patients also have been to the health department for vaccinations and these records are already recorded in the system and available to us.

What do you think is the best feature of the registry for your patients?

As a consequence of the ability to retrieve immunization records from the registry, the patient can receive appropriate vaccinations at the proper time, without over- or under-vaccination.

If another doctor's office were to call and ask you why they should enroll in the registry, what would you say?

Information is absolutely mandatory to do a good job in vaccinating our children. Knowing what vaccines the child has had from another provider is essential to valid immunization decisions. Florida SHOTS is the modern version of the written shot record that many parents are prone to lose or forget to bring to the office. Electronic medical records are the wave of the future.

The ability to rapidly print out a Florida school immunization 680 form is a major timesaver for the staff.

The built-in immunization algorithms help identify minimal immunization intervals to be sure the vaccines are administered at the appropriate times.

Is there any other information you would like to share about your experience with Florida SHOTS?

Seventy percent of today's vaccinations are supplied to children in private physician offices. Since we live in a mobile society, it is quite frequent for young children to have several medical providers over their first few years of life. The central immunization registry will facilitate rapid dissemination of vaccine information from one provider to another, improving our overall national immunization effort.

Did You Know?

According to statewide immunization surveys conducted by the Department of Health, Florida's immunization levels in the two-year-old population have increased from 63.2% in 1991, to 79.4% in 2003. This accomplishment is the result of dedicated health professionals like you who have worked tirelessly to ensure that children are immunized on time. Supporting initiatives and tools like the immunization registry system help sustain a strong vaccine delivery infrastructure.

Tech Tips

Q: When will the reminder/recall features of Florida SHOTS be available to private providers?

A: Reminder/recall features have been successfully implemented on the public provider side of Florida SHOTS and will be available to private providers by the end of February 2005. The reminder/recall functions allow providers to select information on a variety of criteria such as child's age, vaccine type, and due dates for next or overdue doses. Providers then know which children have missed a vaccination and which are due for vaccinations and can notify parents accordingly. Reminder/recall features help parents keep their kids healthy!

Coming Soon to an Office Near You...



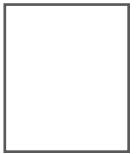
REGIONAL COORDINATORS

We're fortunate to have several talented regional coordinators and trainers at Florida SHOTS who look forward to working with your office. This team travels throughout the state of Florida to work hand-in-hand with SHOTS enrollees. Regional coordinators are available to meet with your staff, show a presentation of how Florida SHOTS works, answer questions about the registry, and help you enroll. Once your application is accepted, one of our trainers will come to your office and work with your staff for hands-on training about the functionality of the registry.



SHOTS TRAINERS

Call (877) 888-SHOT or return the tear-off card included on this newsletter to schedule a presentation with a regional coordinator. After your application is accepted, a trainer will contact your office to schedule staff training.



The Florida Department of Health Bureau of Immunization
Bin A-11, 4052 Bald Cypress Way
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1719

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I-TRENDS

Reminders and Recalls

determine immunization coverage levels for preschool-age children in both the public and private sectors.

Despite these recommendations and the compelling evidence of effectiveness, a 1995 survey indicated that only 35% of pediatricians and 23% of family physicians were using reminder or recall messages. The 2002 study reported in this article sought to determine why this was the case. According to its findings, both users and nonusers of reminder or recall messages identified time and money as the most important barriers to implementing these methods. In the pediatrician group, the next most commonly named barrier was not having a simple way of identifying children at a specific age.

The 2002 study suggests that despite recommendations made by the Task Force on Community Preventive Services and the National Vaccine Advisory Committee, fewer than 1 in 5 pediatric or multispecialty group practices are currently using immunization reminder or recall messages. Practices in which a champion was leading efforts to improve immunization coverage were approximately twice as likely to be using reminder or recall messages as other practices. These factors were also highly associated with the reported likelihood of adopting a new reminder or recall system during the next year.

Both users and nonusers of immunization reminder or recall messages named lack of

time and funding as the most important barriers to implementing such methods. The qualitative phase of this study found that users had implemented many different methods to overcome these barriers, including eliciting staff interest through feedback reports and participation in local or state immunization registries that provide the capability to perform automated reminder and recall. The qualitative interviews also suggested that adoption of reminder or recall messages is associated with the perception that immunization delivery is a responsibility of the health care system, rather than of the parent or the individual provider alone.

In conclusion, recall and reminder messages remain underused by both pediatricians and public health clinics. Encouraging pediatric practices to adopt these approaches is particularly important because most US children receive their vaccines from private sector providers. For both pediatricians and public health clinics, adopting these practices will require overcoming limits on time, funding, and practices' inability to identify children at specific age groups. Promising strategies to promote adoption of these practices include encouraging use and expansion of immunization registries, recruiting and training champions to promote immunization delivery improvement efforts, and helping practices to develop methods to identify children at specific ages.

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Welcome Aboard!

record with new shots. In addition, any child born on or after January 1, 2003, is already registered in the system, and all we have to do is quickly update the immunization histories that we have on file for these children. We have some patients that need blue 680 forms every couple of months for day care. And the parents like the printed registry records better because they look cleaner than the handwritten forms, and they can get an updated shot record at each visit. With the handwritten blue 680s, parents usually had to wait three days then come back for an updated form or wait to have them sent through the mail; however, with the automated 680 form available through Florida SHOTS, we can give the parent the updated form during the visit. Parents really appreciate this."

Call (877) 888-SHOT for more information about Florida SHOTS or log onto www.flshots.com to access the electronic enrollment form for immediate enrollment.

YES, please contact me to schedule a visit with a regional coordinator to enroll in Florida SHOTS.

Sign me up for electronic copies of *SHOTS Tracker*.

EMAIL 1: _____

EMAIL 2: _____

EMAIL 3: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

COUNTY: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ FAX: _____

EMAIL: _____

How Do I Enroll in Florida SHOTS?

SIGN UP TODAY!

Fill out this information card and mail it back to us. Please include proper postage.

Call **(877) 888-SHOT**, or send an email to the help desk at **flshots@doh.state.fl.us** if you need more information.

So many enrollment options... and they're all FREE!



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NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE:

Easy Enrollment Form

www.flshots.com/Providers.html

Florida SHOTS Enrollment: Fast. Easy. Free.

Florida SHOTS (State Health Online Tracking System) is a free, statewide, centralized electronic immunization registry that helps health care providers and parents keep track of immunization records. Enroll today at <http://www.flshots.com>.

E-Tracker

To receive this newsletter via email as well as regular mail, please fill out and return the tear-off card included in this newsletter. Include as many email addresses as you would like to receive the newsletter.

