



News Release

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DHCS RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD FOR EXPANDING COVERAGE FOR ADULT VACCINES

SACRAMENTO – The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) received a national award today for expanding Medicaid coverage to include all routine adult vaccines as a pharmacy benefit, making California one of only a few states that do so.

The National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit (NAIS) presented the 2017 "Immunization Neighborhood Champion" Award to DHCS, which administers Medi-Cal, during a meeting in Atlanta, Ga. The award recognizes the department's efforts to improve vaccination rates within the state.

"We are honored to be recognized for our efforts to help adults in Medi-Cal stay as healthy as possible," said DHCS Director Jennifer Kent. "Immunizations are vital to preventing many illnesses that can afflict some adults."

Medi-Cal previously covered only a few vaccines for adults through the pharmacy benefit. But last year, DHCS issued a letter to all providers and Medi-Cal managed care plans requiring them to cover, as part of the pharmacy benefit, all adult vaccines in the routine immunization [schedules](#) published by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Among the more than 15 vaccines covered are flu, pneumonia and Hepatitis A & B.

As a pharmacy benefit, pharmacists can administer the vaccines pursuant to a protocol with a prescriber, and also may independently initiate and administer vaccines on the ACIP-recommended routine immunization lists. Pharmacists who administer immunizations must meet training and certification requirements.

The annual Immunization Excellence Awards focus on individuals and organizations that exemplify the meaning of the "immunization neighborhood," i.e., they exhibit collaboration, coordination, and communication among immunization stakeholders dedicated to meeting the immunization needs of the patient and protecting the community from vaccine-preventable diseases.

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