The field of public health can be proud of its successes with vaccines—smallpox has been eradicated and other serious diseases are now much less of a threat. Indeed, vaccines may be our best defense against infectious diseases.\(^1\) The success story of vaccines also has some unintended side effects. With many infectious diseases becoming rare, many people see these as less of a threat and decide not to vaccinate their children.\(^1\) In addition, fears about side effects of vaccines have resulted in public protests about the dangers of vaccination, resulting in a growing number of parents not vaccinating their children.\(^2\)\(^3\)

The *Let’s Get Healthy California Task Force Final Report* showed that vaccination rates for all doses of recommended vaccines among California children aged 19 to 35 months was about 68%, slightly lower than the national rate of 70%.\(^4\) Medi-Cal claims and encounter data could not provide a directly comparable measure to the overall California rate, but it was possible to evaluate if racial/ethnic disparities might exist. The Figure shows that Asians/Pacific Islanders and Latinos were slightly more likely to be vaccinated as compared to African Americans and Whites. Although Medi-Cal quality reports have shown relatively low immunization rates among Medi-Cal members,\(^5\) it is likely that some of the low immunization rates shown in the Figure are at least partially related to incomplete claims and encounter data within this domain.

### Figure

**Medi-Cal Patients’ Immunizations by Second Birthday, by Race/Ethnicity, 2011-2012**


Note: Members eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid were excluded; Patients 2 years old at the end of the report; PI= Pacific Islander; MMR = Measles, Mumps, and Rubella; DTap = Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis.