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IMMUNIZEVA URGES VIRGINIANS TO COMPLETE RECOMMENDED IMMUNIZATIONS DURING NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION AWARENESS MONTH AND BACK-TO-SCHOOL

Maintaining a vaccine schedule is critical to protecting Virginians from vaccine-preventable illnesses.

(Richmond, VA) — ImmunizeVA, a statewide coalition of immunization stakeholders representing medical, public health, and nonprofit professionals, urges Virginians to get caught up on recommended vaccines to reduce the transmission of communicable diseases as Virginians return to in-person events.

August is National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM), an annual opportunity to remind Virginians about the importance of staying on track with a recommended vaccine schedule. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many routine vaccinations, including meningitis, HPV, and Hepatitis A, were delayed because of missed annual doctor's visits. ImmunizeVA urges Virginia families and residents to speak with a medical professional to get back on track with a recommended vaccine schedule.

"Vaccines are critical to stopping the spread of illnesses and helping to keep communities safe and healthy. With Virginia children returning to school and young adults leaving for college, August marks an important reminder to speak to your medical professionals to maintain the recommended vaccine schedule," said Rebecca Epstein, Senior Program Manager of ImmunizeVA.

Infants, small children, college students, seniors, and other Virginia communities should complete missed vaccinations before returning to school and other in-person settings. The [2021 Virginia Annual Immunization Survey](#) reported a visible drop in kindergarten entry vaccination rates from 84.8 percent to 80.4 percent. Returning to in-person locations could allow for the spread of many vaccine-preventable illnesses if Virginians are not protected.

"Neglecting vaccines could lead to an outbreak of dangerous illnesses in Virginia. Timing and action are important for the best possible protection from vaccine preventable diseases" said Dr. Carolyn Moneymaker, Chair of ImmunizeVA, Pediatrician at Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters, and Virginia Chapter Immunization Representative to the American Academy of Pediatrics. A wide range of vaccines is recommended for children and teens that require multiple doses at specific ages and times. Virginia's school [immunization requirements](#) align with the recommended schedule from the Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention, American Academy of Pediatrics, and American Academy of Family Physicians.

There are important vaccines for adults as well, including some recently updated recommendations for certain vaccines like pneumococcal. Adults should receive an annual flu shot and booster shots every ten years to protect themselves from tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. Talk to your medical provider today to ensure you are up to date on your vaccines!

To learn more about the value of immunizations and ImmunizeVA, visit www.immunizevirginia.org.

About ImmunizeVA

ImmunizeVA is a statewide coalition of immunization stakeholders representing medical, public health, and nonprofit professionals, as well as parents and community members. Members are united in their commitment to the coalition's vision of a future where disease does not impact Virginians' quality and length of life that immunizations could have prevented. We work together to improve immunization coverage across the Commonwealth. ImmunizeVA is an Institute for Public Health Innovation (IPHI) initiative. For more information on ImmunizeVA, visit www.immunizevirginia.org and follow ImmunizeVA on Facebook and Twitter @ImmunizeVa.

About Institute for Public Health Innovation (IPHI)

IPHI develops multi-sector partnerships and innovative solutions to improve the public's health and well-being across the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. IPHI's work strengthens health systems and policy, enhances conditions that promote health, and builds community capacity to ensure equitable health opportunities. Nationally, IPHI is one of over 40 public health institutes and a member of the National Network of Public Health Institutes. For more information about IPHI, visit: www.institutephi.org, and follow IPHI on Facebook and Twitter @InstitutePHI.

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