

## BEYOND THE HEADLINES:

# What Employers Need to Know About Vaccines This Fall

9.9.2025



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2025 | 12:00PM - 1:00PM

# Speakers



**Dr. Vin Gupta**

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Major, *United States Air Force*  
*Reserves Medical Corp.*



**Dr. Kate O'Brien**

Director of the Department of  
Immunization, Vaccines and  
Biologicals  
*World Health Organization (WHO)*



**Kim Thiboldeaux**

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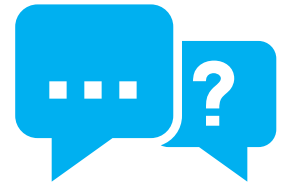
**MODERATOR**  
**Dr. Mark Cunningham-Hill**

Medical Director  
*NEBGH*

# Webinar Procedures



All lines will be muted



Please submit all questions using the “Q&A” dialog box



Email Diane Engel at [dengel@nebgh.org](mailto:dengel@nebgh.org) with any issues during this webinar



A recording of the webinar and a PDF of the presentation will be shared.

Q&A

You have no question.

What h

☐ Send Anonymously Send

# How much is the confusion and uncertainty about vaccines in the news and on social media impacting how your organization is promoting vaccination of employees and dependents??



- ➡ Not at all
- ➡ Somewhat
- ➡ Moderate amount
- ➡ Significant amount



# Employer Call To Action



## Challenges

- Increasing misinformation and distrust of vaccines and the healthcare system
- Decreasing vaccination rates leading to outbreaks of preventable diseases
- Low rates of adult vaccinations especially among working-age adults
- Reduced public health focus and resources
- Reduced vaccine research and longer time for approval of new vaccines
- Risk of a future global pandemic as deadly as COVID predicted to be more than 50% within the next 25 years<sup>1</sup>
- ↓ vaccinations = ↑ Illness which results in increased absenteeism, decreased productivity and increasing potential for business disruption

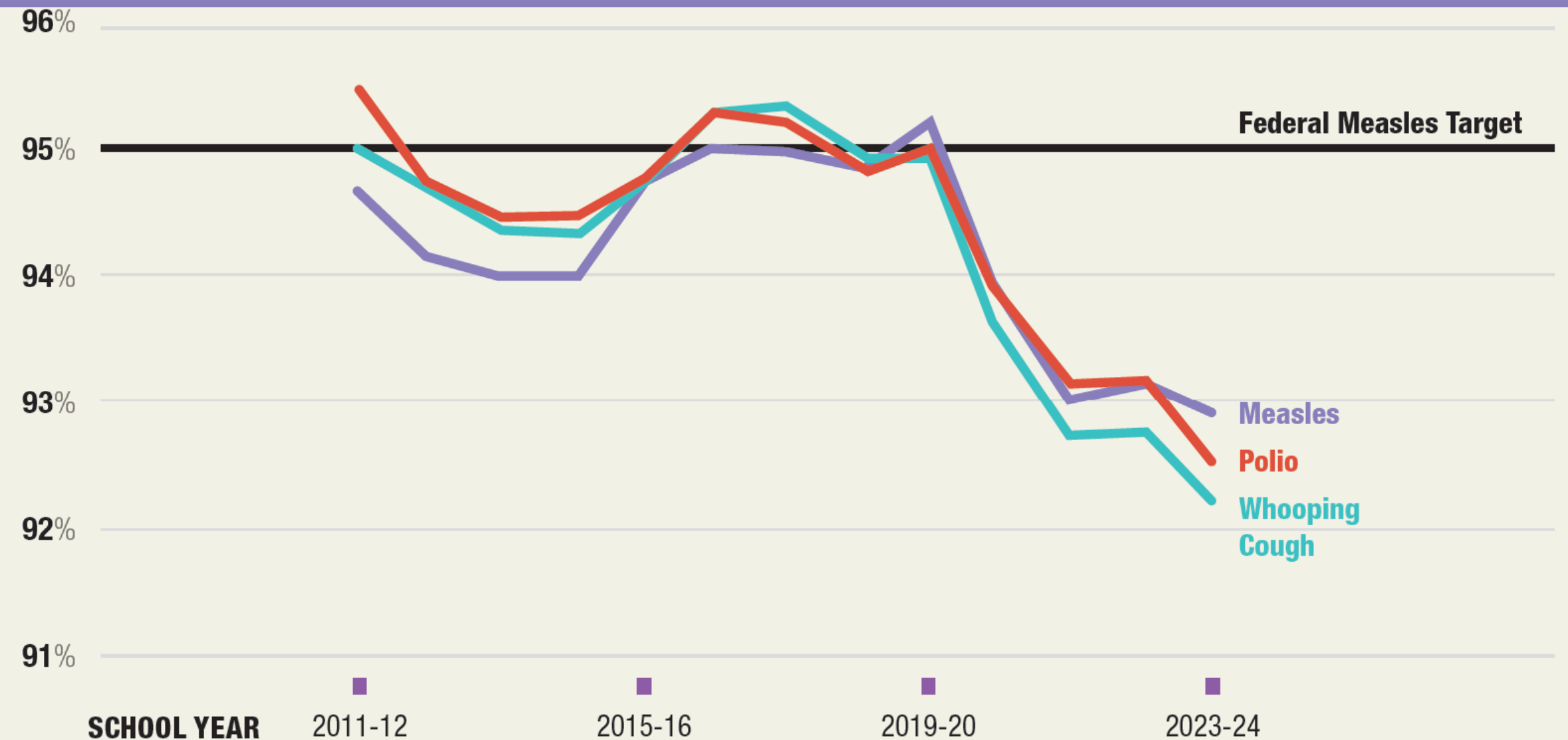
## Opportunity

- Supporting education on vaccines and reducing barriers to vaccination is one of the most cost-effective interventions with an ROI of 54:1<sup>2</sup>

1. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/the-next-pandemic-could-come-soon-and-be-deadlier>
2. <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/sites/default/files/2024-02/final-draft-vaccine-roi-policy-brief-feb-2021ax.pdf>

## SHARE OF U.S. KINDERGARTNERS VACCINATED AGAINST MEASLES, POLIO AND WHOOPING COUGH

Source: Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention



Uptake of adult recommended vaccinations is low across the U.S. population, with rates as low as 22.8% for the age group 19-50.

# Do you know what the current vaccine recommendations are for flu, COVID and RSV?

- ➡ Yes
- ➡ Yes, but not 100% certain
- ➡ No





# COVID Vaccines (FDA Approval)



## Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty)

- Approved for: Individuals 65 years and older.
- Restricted approval: Individuals 5 through 64 years of age **with at least one high-risk underlying condition.**
- Not authorized for: Children younger than 5 years old.

## Moderna (Spikevax)

- Approved for: Individuals 65 years and older.
- Restricted approval: Individuals 6 months through 64 years of age **with at least one underlying health condition.**

## Novavax (Nuvaxovid)

- Approved for: Individuals 65 years and older.
- Restricted approval: Individuals 12 through 64 years of age **with at least one underlying health condition.**
- Note: Novavax is a protein-based vaccine, different from the mRNA technology used by Pfizer and Moderna.

# What health conditions qualify you for a COVID shot?

The Food and Drug Administration says people between the ages of 6 months and 64 years must have at least one high-risk health condition to qualify for a COVID vaccine during the 2025-2026 season. Currently, that list includes:

- Cancer
- Cerebrovascular disease (stroke)
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic liver disease
- Chronic lung disease (asthma, COPD, etc.)
- Cystic fibrosis
- Dementia and Parkinson's disease
- Diabetes (type 1 and type 2)
- Disabilities (ADHD, cerebral palsy, intellectual and learning disabilities, etc.)
- Heart conditions and heart disease
- Hemoglobin blood disorders (sickle cell disease, thalassemia)
- HIV infection
- Immunocompromised condition
- Mental health condition or mood disorders
- Being overweight or obese
- Lack of physical activity
- Pregnancy
- Smoking or history of smoking
- Solid organ or blood stem cell transplant
- Substance use disorders
- Tuberculosis



# COVID Vaccines (CDC & ACIP)

CDC Website 9/5/2025



## WHAT TO KNOW

- CDC recommends a 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine for most adults ages 18 and older. Parents of children ages 6 months to 17 years should discuss the benefits of vaccination with a healthcare provider.
- The COVID-19 vaccine helps protect you from severe illness, hospitalization, and death.
- It is especially important to get your 2024–2025 COVID-19 vaccine if you are ages 65 and older, are at high risk for severe COVID-19, or have never received a COVID-19 vaccine.
- Vaccine protection decreases over time, so it is important to get your 2024–2025 COVID-19 vaccine.



## ACIP

- ➡ On June 27, 2024, ACIP recommended 2024–2025 COVID-19 vaccination with an FDA-approved or authorized vaccine for all persons aged ≥6 months..



# COVID Vaccination and Pregnancy

- While HHS Secretary announced that the CDC would no longer recommend COVID vaccinations for healthy pregnant women the CDC still recommends vaccination for pregnant women
- ACOG strongly support COVID vaccination in pregnancy
- Why:
  - More likely to get very sick from COVID-19 compared to those who are not pregnant.
  - More likely to need hospitalization, intensive care, or the use of a ventilator or special equipment to breathe if you do get sick from COVID-19. Severe COVID-19 illness can lead to death.
  - At increased risk of complications that can affect your pregnancy and baby including, preterm birth or stillbirth.
  - Vaccines are safe in pregnancy





# Flu and RSV Vaccines

## Influenza

- Recommended for everyone 6 months and older

## RSV

### Adults:

- All adults ages 75 and older
- Adults ages 50–74 at increased risk of severe RSV disease
- Administered as a single dose





# RSV – Pregnancy and Infants

**CDC recommends one dose of Pfizer's Abrysvo for women who are:**

32 through 36 weeks and 6 days' gestation and baby to be born during the typical RSV season

- Vaccinate - September (1–2 months before the anticipated start of RSV season) through January (2–3 months before the anticipated end of the RSV season)
- Note varies for Alaska and tropical climates (including but not limited to southern Florida, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, U.S.-affiliated Pacific Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands)

## Infants

An infant RSV antibody (nirsevimab or clesrovimab) is recommended for infants younger than 8 months of age who are born during or are entering their first RSV season (typically fall through spring) if:

- The mother did not receive RSV vaccine during pregnancy, or
- The mother's RSV vaccination status is unknown, or
- The infant was born within 14 days of maternal RSV vaccination.



# Implications

## Physician Implications

- ▶ Can continue to prescribe and administer all vaccines to all children, even if it's now considered "off-label" (may be some liability risk)

## Pharmacist Implications

- ▶ States that tie pharmacist immunization authority to FDA approval –
  - Children 6 months - 4 years:**
    - ▶ Moderna vaccine, only if they have an underlying condition.
  - Children 5 years – 11 years**
    - ▶ Pfizer, only if they have an underlying condition that puts them at high risk for severe outcomes from COVID-19
  - Children 12 years - 17 years:**
    - ▶ Pfizer, Moderna, and Novavax vaccine, only if they have an underlying condition that puts them at high risk for severe outcomes from COVID-19
- ▶ States that tie to CDC/ACIP
  - Children 6 months - 17 years:**
    - ▶ Shared clinical decision making for children who are not moderately or severely immunocompromised
- ▶ Pharmacist Liability
  - ▶ State liability if they do not follow scope of practice
  - ▶ Liability under CICI\* if they do not follow CDC/ACIP COVID-19 recommendations
  - ▶ Liability under CICI\* if they vaccine between 6 months and 3 years of age



# Pharmacy based vaccinations

**CVS has already shifted its policies for administering COVID vaccines to patients:**

- ▶ In 13 states<sup>1</sup>, including New York, Florida, Pennsylvania and Arizona, and in Washington, D.C., patients, regardless of age, will need a prescription from an authorized prescriber to get an updated COVID-19 shot from a CVS Health pharmacy or MinuteClinic
- ▶ In three states—Massachusetts, New Mexico and Nevada—CVS pharmacies cannot administer the COVID vaccine without ACIP approval, even with a prescription

**CVS/pharmacy**

**Walgreens – 16 states require a prescription<sup>2</sup>**



1. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/the-next-pandemic-could-come-soon-and-be-deadlier>  
2. <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/sites/default/files/2024-02/final-draft-vaccine-roi-policy-brief-feb-2021ax.pdf>



Florida is aiming to become the first US state to cancel all of its vaccine mandates



# West Coast Health Alliance



- California, Oregon, and Washington to launch new West Coast Health Alliance to uphold scientific integrity in public health
- The three states will start coordinating health guidelines by aligning immunization recommendations informed by respected national medical organizations

Table 1: Summary of the updated SAGE recommendations for COVID-19 vaccination

Vaccination status	Population	Recommendation
Never received a COVID-19 vaccine	All adults	1 dose <sup>1</sup>
	Children and adolescents with comorbidities	
	Health workers with direct patient contact	
	Pregnant persons	1 dose
	Any individual who is immunocompromised	2 to 3 doses <sup>2</sup>
Previously received at least 1 dose of a COVID-19 vaccine	<b>Adults over 75 or 80 years old<sup>3</sup></b>	Revaccination 6 to 12 months after the most recent dose
	<b>Adults over 50 or 60 years old<sup>3</sup> with comorbidities</b>	
	Any individual who is immunocompromised	
	<b>Adults over 50 or 60 years old<sup>3</sup></b>	Revaccination 12 months after the most recent dose
	<b>Adults with comorbidities</b>	
	Health workers with direct patient contact	Single dose in each pregnancy
	Pregnant persons	
	Healthy adults	Revaccination not routinely recommended
	Children and adolescents	

Legend:

<b>High priority-use groups</b>	Sub-populations with special considerations
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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND MENTAL HYGIENE**

Michelle Morse, MD, MPH  
*Acting Commissioner*

**Statement From Acting Commissioner of the New York City Health Department Dr. Michelle Morse**

“Today, Governor Kathy Hochul and New York State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald issued an executive order<sup>1</sup> that restores access to COVID-19 vaccines across New York State following reports that some pharmacies began restricting COVID-19 vaccinations after federal actions removed millions of people from eligibility.

Vaccines save lives and we commend Governor Hochul and Commissioner McDonald for ensuring that all New Yorkers have access to the COVID-19 vaccine ahead of respiratory virus season.

No new data has been presented that raises any concerns about the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine – especially for those who may need it the most. Restricting vaccines and taking away New Yorkers’ ability to protect their health is deadly.

For over 200 years, the NYC Health Department has protected the health and safety of its residents, supported by the facts grounded in science. We remain committed to using science, data, and equity to put the health and well-being of New Yorkers first.”

1. <https://www.governor.ny.gov/executive-order/no-52-declaring-disaster-state-new-york-due-federal-actions-related-vaccine-access>  
<https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-main.page>



# Checklist

## ☐ **Provide Information**

- ☐ Do your employees have access to accurate and up-to-date information on vaccines?

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## ☐ **Make It Easy for Employees to Get Vaccinated**

- ☐ Do you host vaccination clinics or partner with other organizations to do so?
- ☐ Do you offer time off for obtaining vaccinations?

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## ☐ **Communicate Your Organization's Commitment to Vaccination**

- ☐ Are your organization's leaders leading by example?
- ☐ Have you developed campaigns to promote vaccination supported by mailers, social media, newsletters and employee platforms?
- ☐ Have you considered combining incentives with your communication campaigns?

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## ☐ **Collaborate with DEI Leadership and ERGs**

- ☐ Have you shared information about vaccination disparities with ERGs?
- ☐ Have you encouraged them to share experiences, and asked them for suggestions to encourage vaccination?

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## ☐ **Fight Misinformation**

- ☐ Are you actively fighting vaccine misinformation and employing tactics like using visuals, quoting experts and telling stories as part of your messaging?
- ☐ Are you emphasizing the benefits of vaccination and keeping messages clear and positive?



# Checklist

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- ☐ **Promote Immune Fitness as Part of Your Well-being Strategy**
    - ☐ Do you emphasize the importance of PCPs and wellness check-ups?
    - ☐ Do you provide information on vaccines at employee health fairs?
    - ☐ Have you enlisted your digital vendors in efforts to promote vaccination?
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- ☐ **Make Sure Vaccinations Don't Require Out-of-Pocket Expense**
    - ☐ Do your employees know they won't have to pay for recommended vaccines?
- 
- ☐ **Collect Vaccination Data About Your Employee Population**
    - ☐ Do you work with your health plan to collect data to track and better understand vaccination rates in your population?
    - ☐ Do you set targets for selected vaccines and track progress?
- 
- ☐ **Advocate**
    - ☐ Does your health plan know vaccination is a key priority for your organization?



# Why Focus on Vaccines?

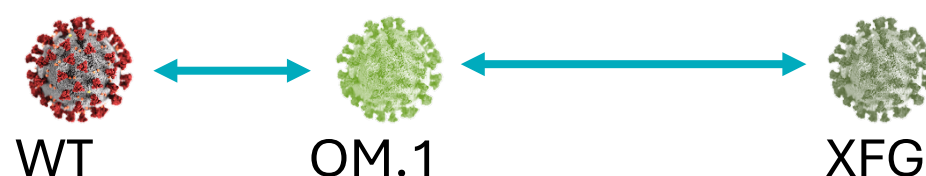
## Disease

**Influenza<sup>1</sup>:**  
12K – 51k deaths  
100K-700K Hospitalizations  
9.3-41MM Infections

**1,431 Cases of Measles<sup>2</sup>:**  
35 Outbreaks; 34% age 20+

**37,000 HPV Related Cancers<sup>3</sup>**  
58% Women 42% Men  
Oropharynx (↑), Cervix, and Anal Cancers

## Antigenic Cartography<sup>4</sup>



## Cost Burden

**COVID \$16 Trillion<sup>1</sup>**  
Direct + Indirect Costs

**Adult Vaccine-Preventable  
Diseases \$9 Billion<sup>2</sup>**  
(Range \$4.7-\$15.2B)

**Influenza<sup>3</sup>**  
Direct Costs - \$3.2B  
Indirect Costs - \$5.3B from  
the 18-64 age group

## Responsibility

**Employers 'Own' 90% of  
the Gap<sup>1</sup>**

**Employers Most Trusted  
Source<sup>2</sup>**

**>60% of the Population  
Have Employer Provided  
Health Benefits<sup>3</sup>**

**Access - 33% of the day  
Spent at work**

**Protect the All, Including the  
Most Vulnerable Employees**

1. [https://www.cdc.gov/flu-burden/php/about/index.html?CDC\\_AAref\\_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/burden/past-seasons.html](https://www.cdc.gov/flu-burden/php/about/index.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/burden/past-seasons.html)  
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/data-research/>  
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/hpv/cases.html>  
4. <https://www.pnas.org/doi/epub/10.1073/pnas.2310917121>

1. <https://schaeffer.usc.edu/research/covid-19s-total-cost-to-the-economy-in-us-will-reach-14-trillion-by-end-of-2023-new-research/>  
2. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27733424/>  
3. <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/risk-management/economic-effect-influenza-businesses>

1. <https://www.vaccinetrack.com/Trend>  
2. <https://www.edelman.com/trust/2023/trust-barometer/special-report-trust-at-work>  
3. <https://www.kff.org/health-policy-101-employer-sponsored-health-insurance/?entry=table-of-contents-introduction>



# Resources



healthychildren.org

Powered by pediatricians. Trusted by parents.  
from the American Academy of Pediatrics

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/Pages/default.aspx>



<https://commonhealthcoalition.org/vaccine-resources/>

American Academy  
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

<https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/immunizations/vaccination-recommendations-by-the-aap/>



Immunize.org

<https://www.immunize.org/>

VaxAssist by 

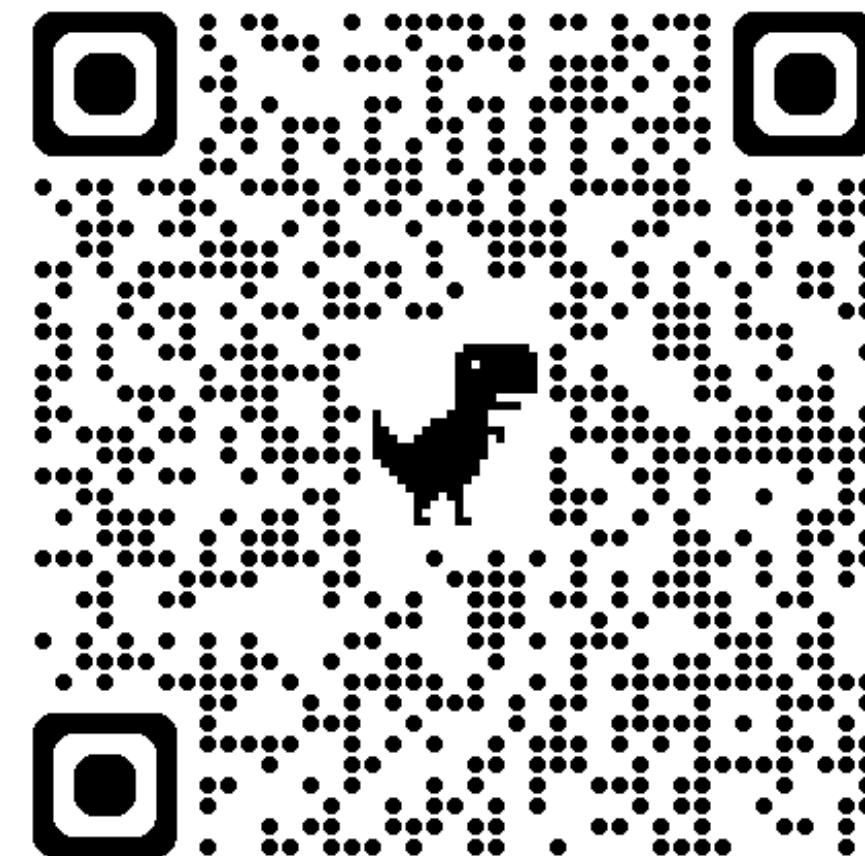
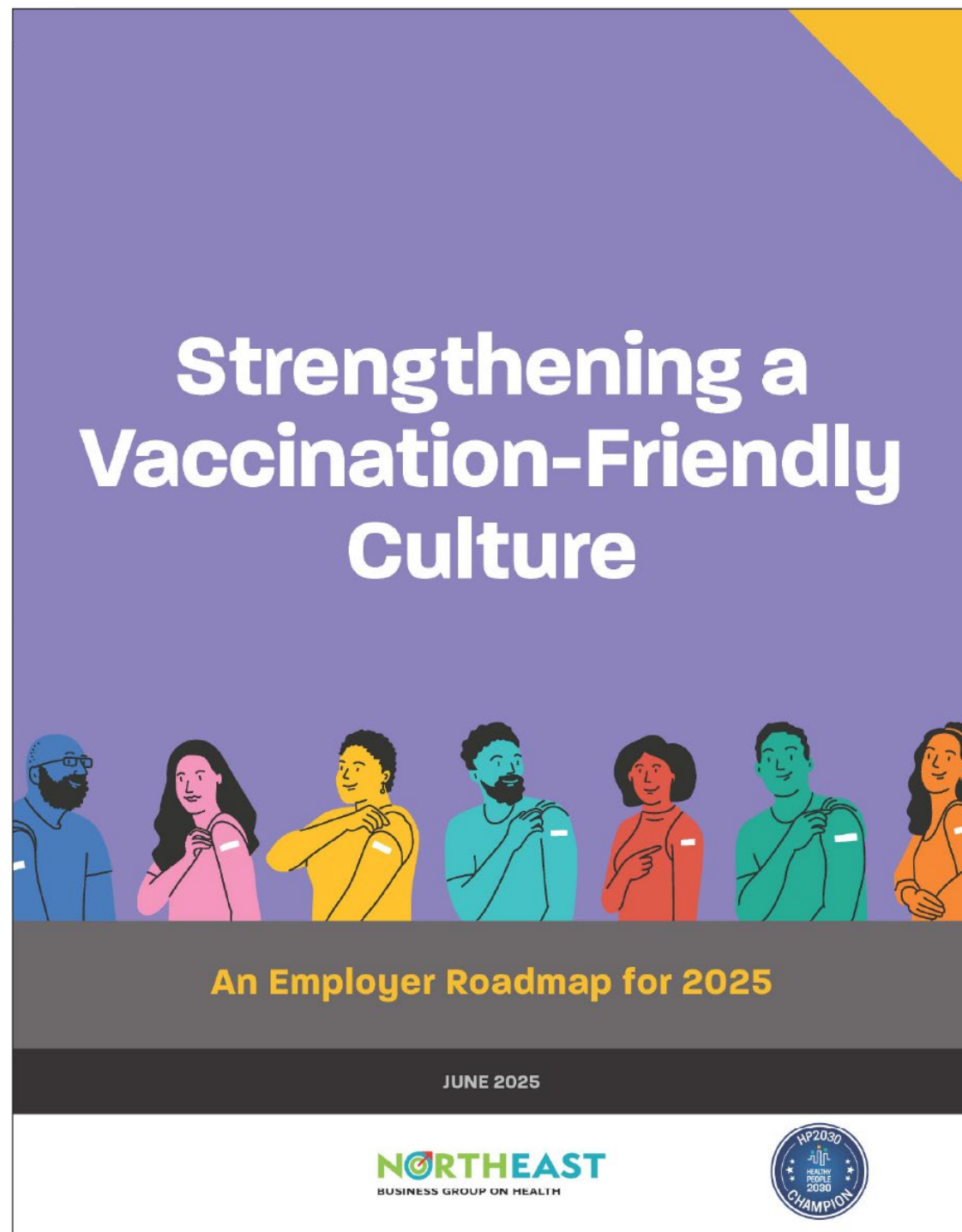
<https://www.vaxassist.com/>



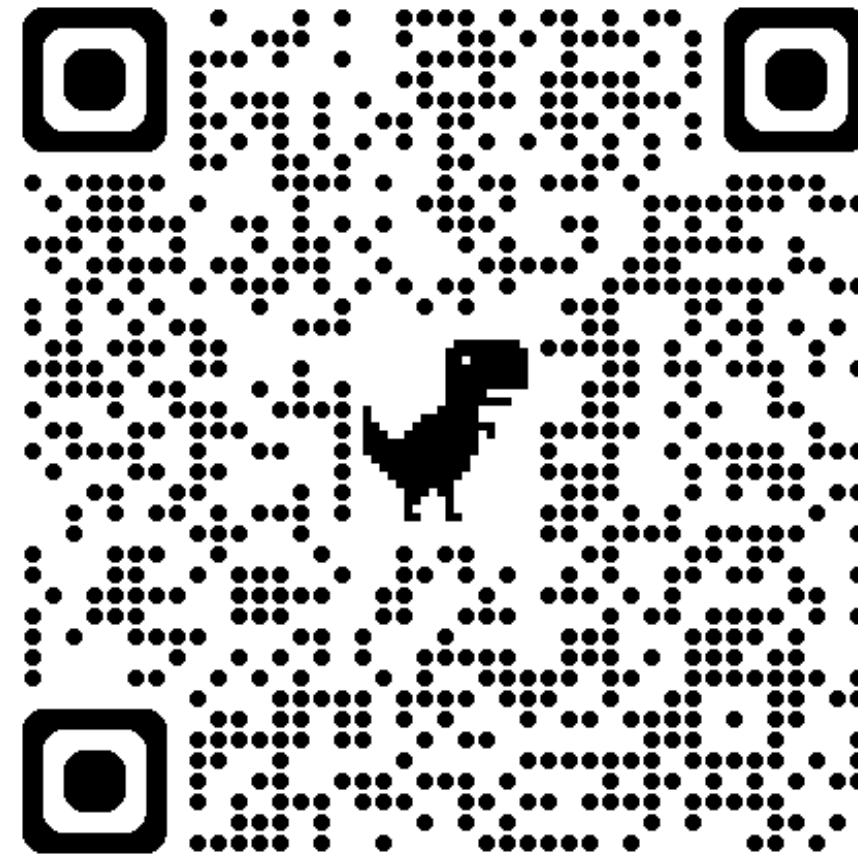
ACOG

The American College of  
Obstetricians and Gynecologists

<https://www.acog.org/news/news-releases/2025/08/acog-releases-updated-maternal-immunization-guidance-covid-influenza-rsv>



**Download the guide!**



**Dr. Vin Gupta**  
Medical Analyst  
[NBC News](#)



**Dr. Kate O'Brien**  
Director of the Immunization, Vaccines  
and Biologicals (IVB) Department  
[World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)



# Questions?

## Upcoming NEBGH events:

- **September 18** – 2025 Pharmacy Benefits Conference
- **September 22** – Mondays with Dr. Mark & Dr. Michael
- **October 29** - Proactive Care Navigation: Closing Care Gaps, Cutting Costs
- **November 13** – The Cancer Care Continuum: Supporting Employees Throughout the Cancer Journey

## SAVE THE DATE FOR THESE 2026 EVENTS!

- **February 12** – 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Tribute to Leadership
- **June 18** – 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Health & Wellness Benefits Conference



**Remember to rate this webinar!**

