What do CDC data tell us about the COVID-19 pandemic’s effects on Routine Childhood Vaccination?

After the COVID-19 pandemic started, we saw a concerning drop in childhood routine vaccinations. Provider vaccine orders for children through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program decreased by 14% in 2020 after the national COVID-19 public health emergency was declared.

**SIGNS OF IMPROVEMENT**

Childhood vaccine orders through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program and administration have steadily rebounded. As of January 2023, childhood VFC vaccine orders are within 1% or exceed pre-pandemic levels.

Vaccination coverage has remained high and stable overall among young children, with coverage of more than 9 in 10 children for most recommended vaccines nationally.

**IMPROVEMENT NEEDED**

Vaccination coverage among certain groups declined since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and may have not yet recovered.

Combined 7-vaccine series coverage by age 24 months fell 4-5% among children living below poverty or in rural areas.

Kindergarten vaccination coverage has steadily declined for all vaccines and in a majority of states over the past 2 school years to lowest levels in a decade.

At least ¼ Million children that entered kindergarten during the pandemic are potentially susceptible to vaccine preventable disease.

Disparities in vaccination coverage by race/ethnicity, income, and insurance status that existed prior to the pandemic persisted in 2021 but did not worsen during the pandemic. However disparities worsened for young children living in rural areas.

**IMMEDIATE ACTION NEEDED**

We must act now to catch up children who delayed or missed getting routine vaccinations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Getting routine immunizations back on track is a goal that we can achieve by working together to reduce barriers, increase access, and strengthen vaccine confidence.

LEARN MORE:

- Routine Immunizations on Schedule for Everyone | 2022 Data Review
  - www.cdc.gov/vaccines/partners/routine-immunizations-lets-rise.html
  - www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-managers/coverage/childvaxview/index.html
  - www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-managers/coverage/schoolvaxview/index.html