Massachusetts Adult Immunization Coalition

Massachusetts Adult Immunization Coalition Meeting

Tuesday, September 29, 2026
10:00am - 12:00pm EST
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Topic	Speaker Name / Organization
Welcome & Updates 10:00 - 10:10 AM	Rich Baker - MAIC Facilitator
Building Trust on Immunization with Young People 10:10 - 10:25 AM	Judy Klein - Unity Consortium
The Power of Storytelling 10:25 - 10:40 AM	Irelynd McCarthy - Families Fighting Flu
Community Health Workers as Immunization Trusted Messengers 10:40 - 10:55 AM	Brianna Breuer - Cambridge Health Alliance Doug Kress - Cambridge Health Alliance
2026-2027 Respiratory Illness Season Update 10:55 - 11:30 AM	Angela Fowler, MD, MPH - MDPH Immunization Division, Associate Medical Director for Vaccine Preventable Diseases
Community Updates 11:25 AM	MAIC Membership

MAIC Updates

Rich Baker provided updates on recent immunization activities, resources, and upcoming events across Massachusetts.

- **Adult Immunization Updates**
  - COVID-19 and influenza vaccines are now orderable through MIIS and DPH's 2026-2027 respiratory illness season vaccination guidance is now available.
- **Summer Updates**
  - MAIC highlighted recent activities, including support for CHA's Mpox Pride Vaccination Campaign, vaccine confidence training with CHA, and the Protected & Proactive: Bridging Immunization and Sexual Health webinar.
  - Rich also shared information about upcoming events, such as 2026/27 Respiratory Illness Season Update webinar and the upcoming 2027 MAIC Conference, taking place March 25, 2027 at the DCU Center in Worcester, MA (registration opens in Janaury 2027).
- **Survey Spotlight**
  - Rich showed findings from a recent survey, suggesting that lack of knowledge and access are important barriers to adult vaccine uptake.

    - While most respondents expressed positive views about vaccines, some reported uncertainty about current recommendations and difficulties accessing vaccination, including vaccine availability and long wait times.

Building Trust on Immunization with Young People

Judy Klein, President of the Unity Consortium, shared an overview of Unity's mission and work, as well as findings from a survey of adults ages 18-34 examining how young people perceive and act on health information.

- Young people's health information ecosystem is "surround sound" - varied with both credentialed and uncredentialed sources influencing health decisions.
- Judy highlighted the increasingly complex role of peer influence in health and vaccine decision-making, including the finding that 44% of respondents reported disregarding healthcare provider guidance in favor of information from family, friends, or social media.
- Judy discussed the importance of rebuilding trust in vaccines through local and trusted messengers, empathetic responses to misinformation, accessible and convenient vaccine opportunities, and messaging that emphasizes protecting oneself and the community.
- Judy also discussed Unity's strategies for reaching different audiences through platforms such as Reddit, TikTok, Snapchat, as well as its work with college health services and a pilot trusted community program for young people. A participant suggested exploring partnerships with college residential advisors to further engage students.

More information and resources from the Unity Project can be found at www.unity4teenvax.org/.

The Power of Storytelling

Irelynd McCarthy shared her personal story of losing her younger sister to influenza and discussed how the experience led her to become involved with Families Fighting Flu (FFF).

- She provided an overview of FFF's mission to honor loved ones through storytelling, education, advocacy, and collaboration with trusted messengers.
- Irelynd emphasized the power of emotional storytelling to make health information more memorable and relatable and shared examples of using personal stories and social media content to reach different audiences, especially younger populations. She notes that storytelling is 22x more effective than sharing statistics when connecting with audiences.
- She also discussed FFF's flu clinics, which incorporate activities such as face painting and giving out stuffed animals to make vaccination a less scary experience.
- In response to a question about ways to amplify FFF's content, Irelynd encouraged attendees to engage with, repost, and share FFF's social media posts.

Families Fighting Flu's TikTok: @famfightflu
Contact Irelynd at lmccarthy@familiesfightingflu.org

Irelynd's presentation slides are attached to this email.

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Community Health Workers as Immunization Trusted Messengers

Brianna Breuer and Doug Kress discussed the role of community health workers (CHWs) as trusted messengers in promoting vaccination and health equity.

- They provided an overview of Cambridge Health Alliance's (CHA) CHW training efforts, including its vaccine confidence training with Massachusetts Vaccine Confidence Project and MAIC, as well as work to prepare CHWs to support their communities with accurate, accessible health information.
- Brianna and Doug highlighted the importance of recruiting CHWs from the communities they serve and building trusted relationships with patients, community members, and organizations.
- They also shared examples of CHA's community-based vaccination efforts and emphasized the value of partnerships in expanding the reach and capacity of initiatives.

Contact Brianna at bbreuer@challiance.org and Doug at dkress@challiance.org.

Brianna and Doug's presentation slides are attached to this email.

2026-2027 Respiratory Illness Season Update

Dr. Angela Fowler, Associate Medical Director of the Immunization Division at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, provided an overview of the 2026-2027 respiratory illness season, focusing on influenza, COVID-19, and RSV surveillance and vaccine recommendations.

- She noted that the upcoming season is expected to be relatively typical and moderate and discussed efforts to provide clear and consistent vaccine recommendations amid varying guidance from different organizations.
- Dr. Fowler reviewed current evidence and recommendations for each respiratory illness, highlighting continued underutilization of vaccination, including approximately 13% of Massachusetts residents receiving a COVID-19 vaccine during the previous season and 42% of Massachusetts residents ages 75 and older receiving an RSV vaccine.
- She also discussed the newly approved mRNA influenza vaccine adults ages 50 and current RSV vaccination recommendations for older adults and those at increased risk for severe disease.

Dr. Fowler's presentation slides are attached to this email.

Upcoming Events

- MCAAP Immunization Initiative Meeting (9/30/26, 6:30 pm)
    - Meeting registration link: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/FgsbLfZOTXeQ1R7nW_1zvQ
- 2026-2027 Respiratory Illness Season Update webinar (10/7/26)

    - Webinar registration link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_K9wN8L7TTK206p-enlKy1Q
- 2026 MIAP Conference (11/4/26)
    - Conference website: https://cvent.me/7OR9GQ
    - Please reach out to Cynthia McReynolds at cmcreynolds@mcaap.org with any questions about the MIAP Conference.

Contact Information:		
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