

MASSACHUSETTS ADULT IMMUNIZATION COALITION MEETING

Tuesday, September 29, 2026
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Massachusetts Adult Immunization Coalition

JSI

Agenda

- Welcome & Updates
  - Rich Baker, MPH - MAIC Facilitator
- Developing Trust with Young People: The Unity Consortium
  - Judy Klein - President and Treasurer of Unity Consortium
- The Power of Storytelling: Families Fighting Flu
  - Irelynd McCarthy - Families Fighting Flu
- Community Health Workers as Immunization Trusted Messengers
  - Brianna Breuer, MA - Training/Technical Assistance Specialist at Cambridge Health Alliance
- 2026-2027 Respiratory Illness Season Update
  - Angela Fowler, MD - MDPH Immunization Division, Associate Medical Director for Vaccine Preventable Diseases

Adult Immunization Updates

- COVID & Flu vaccines are now available to be ordered in MIIS
- DPH vaccine guidance for the 2026/27 respiratory season is now on Mass.gov



Respiratory Virus Immunization Recommendations

ALIGNED WITH EVIDENCE AND GUIDANCE FROM:

AAFP · American Academy of Pediatrics · AMA · Vaccine Integrity Project · ACOG · IDSA

	Influenza (flu)	Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)	COVID-19
Children and Adolescents 0-18 years	Annual flu vaccine for all children 6 months+	All infants <8 months, if no protection from RSV vaccine during pregnancy and children 8-19 months in certain risk groups	All young children ages 6-23 months and children 2-18 years in certain risk groups or if desired
Pregnancy	Annual flu vaccine (avoid nasal spray flu vaccine)	One-time RSV vaccine in first eligible pregnancy if 32-36 weeks pregnant, given between September 1 and March 1	Annual updated COVID-19 vaccine
Adults 19-64 years	Annual flu vaccine for all adults ages 19+	One-time RSV vaccine for adults ages 50-74 at increased risk of severe RSV	Annual updated COVID-19 vaccine
Older Adults 65+ years	Annual flu vaccine for all adults, enhanced flu vaccine (high dose, adjuvanted, recombinant, or mRNA) for 65+, if possible	One-time RSV vaccine recommended for adults ages 50-74 at increased risk and all adults age 75+	Annual updated COVID-19 vaccine for adults 65+, followed by a second dose 6 months later to boost protection
Immunocompromised	Annual flu vaccine for those ages ≥6 months (avoid nasal spray flu vaccine)	Single dose of RSV vaccine for those ages≥18 years and for those ages <18 years, administration should be guided by shared decision making	Annual updated COVID-19 vaccine for those ages ≥6 months
Healthcare Personnel	Annual flu vaccine	Follow age- and risk-based RSV vaccine recommendations	Annual updated COVID-19 vaccine

Scan here to access additional helpful vaccine and immunization resources at www.SpreadTheFacts.org

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MAIC Updates

Summer Updates:

- Support for CHA Mpox Pride Vaccination Campaign
- Presented on Strategies to Build Vaccine Confidence for CHA's teen CHW core competency certification program
- Webinar: Protected & Proactive: Bridging Immunization and Sexual Health
- August proclaimed Massachusetts Immunization Awareness Month
- New MVCP community/provider training: Building Vaccine Confidence
- Webinar: 2026/27 Respiratory Illness Season Update (CMEs)
- Save the date: 2027 MA Adult Immunization Conference
  - Thursday March 25, 2027
  - DCU Center, Worcester, MA



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

A Proclamation

Whereas, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ranks vaccination among the most significant public health achievements of the 20th century; and

Whereas, Vaccines are an exceptionally safe method to prevent disease, as they are thoroughly tested before licensing and carefully monitored to ensure safety; and

Whereas, Vaccines have eradicated smallpox and diseases such as polio and rubella have been eliminated in this country, thanks to vaccines; and

Whereas, Vaccines can prevent cancers caused by Hepatitis B and human papillomavirus (HPV), as well as devastating infections that can lead to pneumonia, encephalitis, and life-long disabilities; and

Whereas, Young children and older adults are particularly vulnerable to vaccine-preventable diseases until they can be fully immunized; and

Whereas, Massachusetts will encourage that all vaccines for children due or overdue should be administered according to the recommended American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) immunization schedule; and

Whereas, Massachusetts will work to increase COVID-19, influenza, pneumonia, and respiratory syncytial virus vaccination rates to ease unnecessary burdens on healthcare systems and comorbidities during the upcoming respiratory illness season; and

Whereas, The state of Massachusetts strives to protect all its residents, both young and old, from preventable diseases,

Now, Therefore, I, Maura T. Healey, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby proclaim August 2026, to be,

MASSACHUSETTS IMMUNIZATION AWARENESS MONTH

And urge all the residents of the Commonwealth to take cognizance of this event and participate fittingly in its observance.

Given at the Executive Chamber in Boston, this first day of August, in the year two thousand and twenty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and fiftieth.

By Her Excellency

Maura T. Healey
Governor of the Commonwealth

Kimberley Driscoll
Lt. Governor of the Commonwealth

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

God Save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Survey: Lack of knowledge, problems with access may affect adult vaccine uptake more than hesitancy

Mary Van Beusekom, MS, September 28, 2026

Topics: Influenza Vaccines , COVID-19 , Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) , Pneumonia

- 89% agree that anyone who wants a vaccine should be able to get one
- 77% agree that vaccines are among the best and most proven ways to protect against serious infectious diseases
- 71% agree that vaccine benefits strongly outweigh the risks

- Despite medical society recommendations for the flu and COVID vaccines for adults, 49% said that the COVID vaccine isn't recommended for them or that they didn't know whether it was recommended, and 28% said the same for the flu vaccine
- 22% said they tried to receive at least one respiratory vaccine but faced a problem such as a lack of availability or long wait time, most often among those seeking pneumococcal (27%) or RSV vaccination (23%)

https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/influenza-vaccines/survey-lack-knowledge-problems-access-may-affect-adult-vaccine-uptake-more

Developing Trust with Young People

Judy Klein
President and Treasurer of Unity Consortium

(See attached resources)

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The Power of Storytelling: Families Fighting Flu

Irelynd McCarthy
Families Fighting Flu

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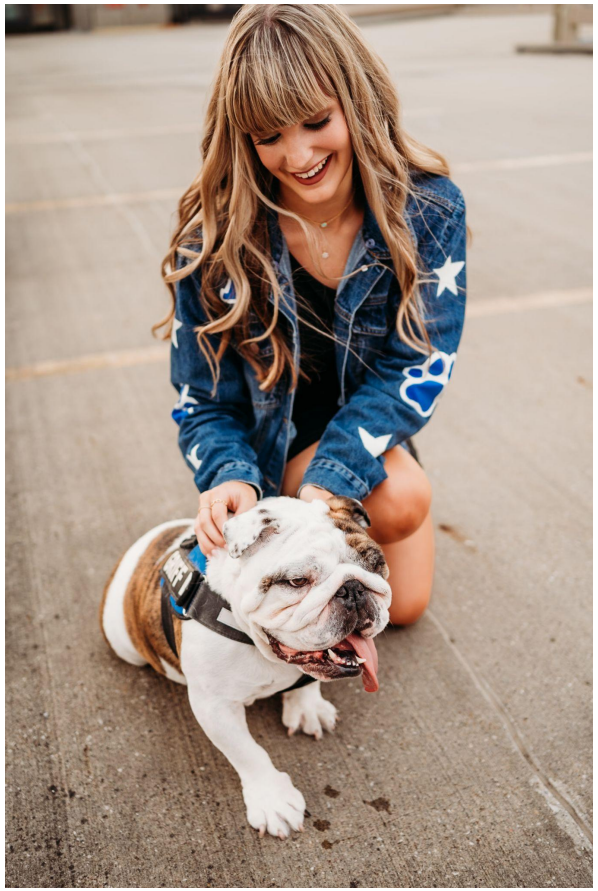
FAMILIES FIGHTING FLU

The Power of Storytelling

Irelynd McCarthy

September 29, 2026

Irelynd McCarthy









FAMILIES FIGHTING FLU

Ayzlee's Story

- December 27th, she complained of her legs hurting
- Tested positive for Influenza A and B
- December 28th, Ayzlee acted confused, so my mom took her to the local ER
- Transferred to a children's hospital in the city
- Oxygen levels were dropping, breathing was labored
- December 29th, Ayzlee passed away.





FAMILIES FIGHTING FLU

How I became involved:





FAMILIES
FIGHTING FLU

Who is Families Fighting Flu

FAMILIES
FIGHTING FLU

Families Fighting Flu - Our History

- Founded in 2004
- By parents who all lost a child under the age of five.
- Came together to advocate and educate.
- Helped change flu vaccine recommendations.
- Work with others in advocating, educating, and promoting the importance of vaccinating, access, and need to test and treat

The Mission

Our Mission is to honor our loved ones!







In sharing personal stories, FFF strives to **increase awareness** about the seriousness of the flu, **reduce** the number of hospitalizations and deaths each year, **drive up vaccination rates** for everyone six months and older, and **encourage** symptomatic individuals to get tested and receive appropriate treatment.

FAMILIES FIGHTING FLU

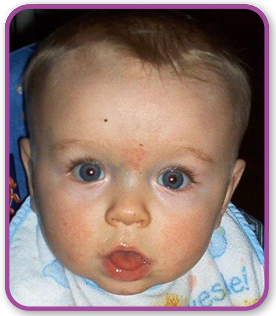
What we do

- **Sharing our family stories**
  - Events, social, earned, and digital media, educational resources, and webinars
  - Participation at advocacy days
- **Providing educational materials and resources**
- **Collaborating with trustworthy messengers and partners**
  - **Flu Clinics**
  - Webinars
  - Events

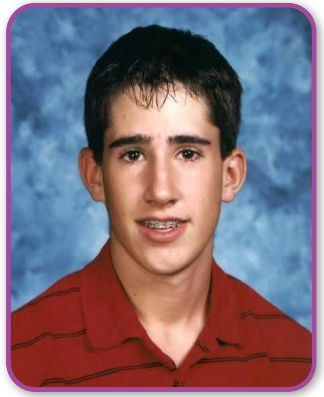
FAMILIES FIGHTING FLU

We reach people "where they are" at local, regional, state, and national levels



















We put a *face* on the *FLU!*

Our goal is to increase vaccine confidence!

FAMILIES FIGHTING FLU

We aim to save lives to prevent more stories like ours.

The Power of Emotional Storytelling



Healthcare decisions can be emotional for most people!

Stories are 22x more memorable than statistics!

We share stories to help prevent others from experiencing what our families have.

People can *RELATE* to stories and it can change their intentions to vaccinate!

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Kaden's Story and Our Advocacy

- Began advocating and sharing our story
  - Media, speaking events, and more
- Began working with Families Fighting Flu
- Kaden became a real superhero
- Kaden Blaze Comic Book
  - Helping to reach more audiences
  - Kaden's story is making a difference







People

December 4th
7-year-old boy loses legs after complications from the flu, urges everyone to get the flu vaccine
72 million unique monthly visitors

WNEM 5

December 9th
Michigan kid's comic book translated to Spanish
Approximate viewership: 30,000
250,000 unique monthly visitors

GOOD MORNING AMERICA

December 10th
Boy who lost leg to flu gets superhero status
1.5 million viewers
GoodMorningAmerica.com, averaged **24.1 million unique monthly visitors** during the third quarter of 2025.

abc 12

December 26
3 years after losing his legs to the flu Grand Blanc superhero returns to hospital where his mission began
Average viewership: 30,000
Unique Monthly Views: 200,000



FAMILIES FIGHTING FLU





The Power of Storytelling

22X more impactful

Kaden Stevenson aka Kaden Blaze

Kaden Stevenson - His Story

Kaden Blaze' Origin Story and Video

Kaden Blaze Comic Book and Resource Page





Meeting People Where They Are: Common Questions We Ask

How do people get their information?

- Social media
- From those they trust and peers

What resonates and will be most impactful?

- Message from someone they trust
- A personal story they can relate to

How do we reach our target audience and make a difference?

- We need to go to them
- Story telling and sharing your own experiences is 22x more impactful

Messaging - Social Media

FAMILIES FIGHTING FLU

Flu Clinics













FAMILIES
FIGHTING FLU, INC.®

Q&A

Contact

FAMILIES FIGHTING FLU

Visit Families Fighting Flu to Learn More

FamiliesFightingFlu.org

Irelynd McCarthy
lmccarthy@familiesfightingflu.org

Community Health Workers as Immunization Trusted Messengers

Brianna Breuer, MA
Training/Technical Assistance Specialist at Cambridge Health Alliance

Massachusetts Adult Immunization Coalition

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CHA's Community Health Worker Training & Collaboration with MA Vaccine Confidence Project

- **CHA is an approved training center per MA Board of Certification of Community Health Workers**
  - 80-hour Core Competency Training + Special Health Topics
  - Can get full state certification after training and 2000 hours of work experience
- **"Understanding & Building Vaccine Confidence"**
  - MVCP collaboration with CHA CHW Trainings
  - Connects with Core Competencies (i.e. Education to Promote Healthy Behavior Change)
  - Combating Misinformation/Disinformation



Over 80 CHW program participants trained on building vaccine confidence between October 2025-October 2026!

How can CHWs help with vaccination efforts?

- **CHW model promotes health equity**
  - Hired from **within or representing the demographics of our communities**;
  - **Provide cultural, linguistic, and age appropriate education** to youth, adults, older adults, immigrants, unhoused, and general populations
  - **Provide linkage** to healthcare and social services,
  - **Develop trusted relationships** with patients, community members, and community organizations.
  - **Embedded** in community based organizations, schools, municipal offices, as well as CHA clinics.

- **Past CHW Vaccination Efforts**
  - CHA vaccine clinics
  - Community Vaccine clinics
  - Community Programing (promotions)



Questions?



Doug Kress
Chief Community Officer, CHA
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Brianna Breuer
Training/Technical Assistance Specialist, CHA
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2026-2027 Respiratory Illness Season Update

Angela Fowler, MD, MPH
Associate Medical Director for Vaccine Preventable Diseases (MDPH)

(See Attachment)

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Upcoming: Vaccine Education Webinar Series

2026-2027 Respiratory Illness Season Update

Wednesday, October 7th at 12:00-1:00PM EST

CMEs/CEUs provided.



Presented by:

Massachusetts Adult Immunization Coalition

Massachusetts Chapter
INCORPORATED IN MASSACHUSETTS
American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

Angela Fowler, MD, MPH
Associate Medical Director for Immunization Division (MDPH)

Upcoming: MIAP 2026

31st Annual MIAP Pediatric Immunization Skills Building Conference

Wednesday, November 4th from 8:00am - 4:00pm EST

DCU Center in Worcester, MA

Updates From the Field

- Questions you have
- Challenges you're experiencing
- Success stories



Will you let us share your story?

We are looking for stories about vaccine champions, innovative programs and more to share in our communications.

Thank you!

Questions? Please contact:

Rich Baker, MAIC Facilitator
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Amy Sgueglia, MAIC Conference Manager
amy.sgueglia@jsi.org

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