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Massachusetts Chapter
OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS
INCORPORATED IN MASSACHUSETTS



**MAIC, MCAAP AND FAMILIES FIGHTING FLU
REMIND HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS TO ‘PROTECT PATIENTS’ DURING NATIONAL INFLUENZA
VACCINATION WEEK AND THROUGHOUT THE FLU SEASON**

*With 206 pediatric deaths due to flu in the 2023-24 season a record high,
the goal is to increase vaccine rates across the Commonwealth.*

(Boston, Mass.) National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) is December 2-6, 2024. [NIVW](#) is an annual observance in December to remind everyone 6 months and older that now is the time to get vaccinated against flu.

Vaccination is particularly important for people who are at higher risk of developing serious flu complications, including pregnant people and young children. Millions of children get sick with flu every year, and thousands will be hospitalized as a result. Pregnant people also are at higher risk of developing serious flu complications.

This is especially compelling due to a record number of pediatric deaths to the flu across the nation during the 2023-24 flu season. 206 pediatric deaths were reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

According to the Massachusetts Respiratory Immunizations [Dashboard](#), during the 2023-24 flu season, only about 2 in 5 residents were vaccinated against the flu.

“Vaccines are the number one way to protect the entire family from falling ill to one or more of the very contagious viruses that circulate during the winter months,” said Cynthia McReynolds, Program Manager of the Immunization Initiative at the Massachusetts Chapter, Academy of Pediatrics (MCAAP). “Healthcare providers are among the most trusted messengers about the value of vaccines, and we want to arm providers across the

state with the most up to date and science-based materials to ensure they can have informed conversations with their patients.”

To promote the importance of flu vaccination during NIVW and throughout the 2024-2025 respiratory illness season, the MCAAP is teaming up with the Massachusetts Adult Immunization Coalition ([MAIC](#)) and [Families Fighting Flu](#), a national organization dedicated to increasing flu vaccination rates to prevent families from experiencing the devastating impact that the flu can cause. Families Fighting Flu was founded 20 years ago by a group of parents who had all lost a child to the flu.

“The initiative that both MAIC and the MCAAP are taking to assist Massachusetts healthcare providers for successful conversations with patients about the importance of immunizations should be a model for other states,” said Michele Slafkosky, Executive Director of Families Fighting Flu. “Our families have suffered unimaginable losses. We hope that sharing our stories with providers, who can then pass the information on to patients, will prove to be a powerful resource to increase vaccination confidence and rates across the state.”

On December 5, the three organizations will partner to offer a free webinar for healthcare providers titled, “***A Father’s Story – Storytelling and Motivational Interviewing to Increase Influenza Vaccine Uptake.***”

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that people over the age of 6 months are vaccinated against [Influenza](#) during the 2024-2025 influenza season.

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About MAIC:

The Massachusetts Adult Immunization Coalition (MAIC) is a collaborative statewide partnership dedicated to increasing adult immunizations through education, networking, and sharing innovative and best practices.

About MCAAP:

The MCAAP is a member organization of over 1,700 pediatricians committed to the attainment of optimal physical, mental, and social health for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. To this end, the members of the Academy dedicate their efforts and resources.

About FFF:

Founded in 2004, Families Fighting Flu (FFF) is a national, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) advocacy organization dedicated to protecting children, families, and communities against the flu. Our organization includes families whose loved ones have suffered serious medical complications or died from influenza, as well as other advocates and healthcare professionals committed to flu education and prevention.