

Experts develop guide for getting more LTC residents immunized

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A summit convened by The Gerontological Society of America (GSA) National Adult Vaccination Program (NAVVP) has resulted in a roadmap for advancing immunization efforts in long-term care (LTC) facilities. A dozen recommendations—including five priority actions—have been outlined in a new white paper, "[Charting a Path to Increase Immunization Rates in the Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Settings](#)."

The summit and [white paper](#) were developed by GSA with the support of Sanofi Pasteur. The summit, held in Washington, DC, in May, welcomed stakeholders from the government, immunization advocacy organizations, and professional societies representing those who work in long-term [care](#).

"Immunization in long-term care is critical as we are dealing with individuals at great risk for getting the flu, pneumonia, shingles, and associated complications," said GSA Past President Barbara Resnick, Ph.D., RN, CRNP, FGSA, who sits on the NAVVP Workgroup and participated in the summit.

Moreover, she added that residents in long-term care are living in close proximity to other individuals and can easily share/pass infections.

"In addition to immunizing residents, it is necessary to immunize staff so that they do not increase resident exposure to viruses and so that staff are not missing days of work," Resnick said. "The white paper developed by GSA has recommendations for how to best motivate and engage staff in

getting immunized themselves and making sure that all residents are immunized."

As identified by the summit's expert attendees, the top five recommended focus areas for future consideration in long-term care are:

- Increase use of mandatory staff vaccination policies.
- Make vaccination a condition of hire.
- Implement mandatory resident vaccination policies across all long-term care settings.
- Create financing tip sheets (e.g., roster billing, best practices, algorithms, calculator of outbreak costs).
- Examine tools and resources for opportunities to weave immunizations into other priorities for post-acute and long-term care facilities.

The other recommended actionable items included: increase use of renewable consent documents; publish resident vaccination rates on facility websites; compile and share state law best practices; create sample score cards/dashboards/standing orders for facilities; work with legal consultants to clarify the why and how of consent; develop tips on staff incentives and processes (e.g., visual performance gauge, survey) and how to combine educational messages with strategy; and develop infomercials for [staff](#) and residents—use consistent messaging for all.

The recommendations and white paper will be used as the basis for future efforts in partnership with the National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit.

Provided by The Gerontological Society of America

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