

Epidemiologist group endorses requiring recommended vaccinations for healthcare personnel, educators and students

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All healthcare personnel should be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases recommended by U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices

(CDC/ACIP) as a condition of employment, according to a new policy statement by the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America. The broad statement of support of the vaccination recommendations, published in the journal *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology*, suggests medical contraindications as the only exception to receiving recommended immunizations.

"Millions of lives have been saved and debilitating diseases have been prevented through vaccinations," said David J. Weber, MD, MPH, co-lead author of the statement and a member of the SHEA Board of Trustees. "It is critical that we continue to use immunizations to the fullest degree possible to keep vaccine-preventable illnesses in check in the U.S."

Because immunizations are safe and effective in reducing [disease transmission](#), and as a result of recent declines in use, the writing panel of 14 infectious diseases experts outlined supporting rationale for recommended vaccinations, except for individuals with a [medical condition](#)/allergy that would make them unsafe.

The statement made three specific recommendations:

1. Healthcare providers should routinely assess their patients' immunization status and strongly recommend appropriate vaccinations, tapping messaging and resources to help reassure patients of the evidence supporting the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines.
2. Attendees and staff of childcare facilities and schools should be held to immunization requirements to reduce the risk of transmission, as well as illness or death from [vaccine-preventable diseases](#) in these group settings given that exclusion of sick participants alone will not prevent transmission of many diseases.
3. Healthcare personnel, including anyone who works or volunteers

in healthcare settings, should be required as a condition of employment to demonstrate immunity to preventable diseases as recommended by CDC/ACIP.

More information: David J. Weber et al, Policy statement from the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA): Only medical contraindications should be accepted as a reason for not receiving all routine immunizations as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology* (2020). [DOI: 10.1017/ice.2020.342](https://doi.org/10.1017/ice.2020.342)

Provided by Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America

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