



## LHD Highlight: Amarillo Public Health

Amarillo Public Health Department is a local government entity dedicated to promoting and protecting the health and well-being of residents in Amarillo, Texas, and the surrounding areas. Program Manager Shanna James, PharmD, emphasizes the department's commitment to building trust and offering comprehensive care. "We're here to promote vaccines," she notes, "but it's equally important to look at the whole patient, ensuring comprehensive care that addresses their overall health." This holistic approach shows Amarillo Public Health's commitment to improving health outcomes and fostering community relationships.



Recently, Amarillo Public Health hosted nine back-to-school outreach events, providing over 150 vaccines to more than 65 families to help make sure children are ready for the school year. At the River Road ISD back-to-school event, Amarillo Public Health administered over 50 vaccines to 14 children. The department also distributed free books and mental health support materials, further promoting community well-being. Amarillo Public Health is making significant strides in educating families about vaccines and empowering them to make informed decisions.



## Vaccination Coverage Rates Updated

The National Immunization Survey (NIS) for 2022 is now available on the Texas Department of State Health Services Immunizations webpage that has the latest estimates of vaccine coverage for Texas children and teens. Data on percent of people vaccinated, by vaccine, comes from the NIS. The NIS uses information from household surveys and records from doctor's offices to estimate vaccination coverage nationwide each year.

Less than two-thirds of 2-year-old children in Texas had the full series of seven vaccinations recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) by this age. Texas' full series of seven vaccinations fell behind the national average at 69.1 percent. The highest vaccination coverage was for polio (91.5 percent), followed by varicella which protects against chickenpox (90.0 percent) and measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR; 89.9 percent).

Vaccination rates among Texas teens were generally below the national averages. While rates of vaccination for human papillomavirus (HPV) have been improving, coverage rates for all other vaccines surveyed, including meningococcal (MenACWY) and tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap) decreased. For teens between 13 and 17 years of age, less than 90 percent were vaccinated against Tdap and MenACWY.

The DSHS Immunization Section recommends all children and teens stay up-to-date following the [ACIP vaccination schedule](#).

Parents consider their child's health care provider to be their most trusted source for

vaccine information. Your strong recommendation is critical for vaccine acceptance! [Prepare for Vaccine Questions Parents May Ask | CDC](#)

For more information on vaccination coverage levels in Texas, visit <https://dshs.texas.gov/immunize/coverage/>

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## Celebrate World Meningitis Day

October 5 is World Meningitis Day—a day to raise awareness of meningitis and its symptoms, the meningococcal bacteria that causes meningitis infections, and prevention methods like vaccines. To get involved in World Meningitis Day on October 5, 2024, Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) encourages providers to share the resources contained in the [World Meningitis Day Campaign Toolkit](#) with patients or stakeholders. The Meningitis Research Foundation, who created this campaign, recommends using the hashtags #WorldMeningitisDay or #DefeatMeningitis when sharing resources from the toolkit.<sup>1</sup>



The Meningitis Research Foundation also encourages providers, clinics, and the public to participate in the [Light The Road Ahead](#) social media event as part of their campaign. To participate in the event, choose an object to illuminate with candles, string lights, or just regular indoor lighting. Then take a photo of the object and share it on social media platforms on October 5 at 8:30 p.m. with the hashtags mentioned above.<sup>2</sup> This social media event aims to “create a global chain of light” at 8:30 p.m. (20:30), regardless of where one lives in the world.<sup>2</sup> The Meningitis Research Foundation chose this time as a reference to the World Health Organization’s [Global Road Map to Defeat Meningitis by 2030](#) plan. The goals of the road map are to eliminate bacterial meningitis epidemics, reduce the cases of vaccine-preventable bacterial meningitis by 50% and associated deaths by 70%, and reduce disabilities and improve quality of life after meningitis.<sup>3</sup>

It is important that providers continue to give strong recommendations for meningococcal vaccines, especially to patients that are at higher risk of

meningococcal disease, such as adolescents. Make sure patients and their parents or guardians have factual information about vaccines by answering questions, providing vaccine information statements (VIS), and offering resources where they can find more information.

If you have questions about the Topple Meningococcal campaign, please reach out to [imm.action@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:imm.action@dshs.texas.gov).

#### References:

1. <https://www.comomeningitis.org/world-meningitis-day-get-involved>
  2. [Light the road | CoMO \(comomeningitis.org\)](#)
  3. [Defeating Meningitis by 2030 \(who.int\)](#)
  4. Texas Department of State Health Services. (2024). *ImmTrac2 Texas Immunization Registry*.
  5. [Health Advisory: Increase in Invasive Meningococcal Disease February 23, 2024 | Texas DSHS](#)
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## Back to School Means Back to Flu



It's back to school for kids across Texas: that means more germs and respiratory viruses. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) expects seasonal flu activity to increase in the coming months. The CDC encourages providers to begin their flu vaccine planning now and vaccinate patients as indicated once 2024–2025 flu vaccines become available.

Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) offers some reminders about reducing the spread of flu in schools.

- It is important to inform students, parents, and school staff that the best way to protect against flu is to get vaccinated each flu season.
- The CDC recommends the seasonal flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older unless there are specific contraindications. Children needing two doses should get their first dose as soon as it becomes available, with the second dose given at least four weeks later.
- DSHS emphasizes that vaccines are the best way to protect against flu.

Updated 2024–2025 flu vaccines will be trivalent and protect against an H1N1, H3N2, and a B/Victoria lineage virus. For more information on updated flu vaccines,

visit: [Information for the 2024-2025 Flu Season | CDC](#). By adopting these preventative measures, you will help children have a better chance at staying healthy this school year.

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## ASN Eligibility and Adult ImmTrac2 Consent

The Adult Safety Net (ASN) program increases access to vaccines for uninsured adults in Texas, which increases immunization coverage levels for adults and improves the health of Texans.

Uninsured adults age 19 and older are eligible to receive ASN vaccines. People with any form of medical insurance, including Medicare or Medicaid, or who are underinsured (insurance does not cover immunizations) are not eligible for the ASN program. However, adults enrolled in the Medical Access Program (MAP) are eligible to enroll in ASN.

Screening for patient eligibility is essential to make sure that only eligible patients receive ASN vaccines. Providers should screen adults at every immunization visit and document the screening. If ineligible adults receive an ASN vaccine, providers should 1.) replace the improperly used vaccine with private stock and 2) complete a [vaccine borrowing form](#) and submit it to their Responsible Entity (RE).

Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Immunization program operates the Texas Immunization Registry, also known as ImmTrac2. This registry plays a key role in improving immunization coverage rates throughout the state by:

- Storing immunization records, including electronic data information from Electronic Health Record (EHR) systems, in a centralized location online.
- Giving easy access to the immunization records of participating clients for registered organizations.
- Forecasting when immunizations are due.
- Generating reports for providers such as reminder-recall reports.

Adults who consent to ImmTrac2 will have their immunization records stored for a lifetime. Individuals who turn 18 and were in ImmTrac2 as minors must sign the [Adult Consent Form](#) before they turn 26 years old to retain their records in ImmTrac2, otherwise the registry will delete their records. As registered users, medical professionals can confirm whether a patient is in ImmTrac2 and assist patients who wish to participate in the registry.

For more information about ASN and ImmTrac2, please visit: [DSHS Immunizations Programs](#).

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## Upcoming Webinars

9/23/24	Webinar: Flu and the Provider Recommendation Time: Noon – 1:00 p.m. (CST) Registration Link: <a href="https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2553109321858717016">https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2553109321858717016</a>
9/24/24	Webinar: 2025 TVFC and ASN Program(s) Re-enrollment Training Time: Noon – 1:30 p.m. (CST) Registration Link: <a href="https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2783681307965394527">https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2783681307965394527</a>
9/25/24	Webinar: 2025 TVFC and ASN Program(s) Re-enrollment Training Time: Noon – 1:30 p.m. (CST) Registration Link: <a href="https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/682985178262157655">https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/682985178262157655</a>
9/26/24	Webinar: 2025 TVFC and ASN Program(s) Re-enrollment Training Time: Noon – 1:30 p.m. (CST) Registration Link: <a href="https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2416316880939404892">https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2416316880939404892</a>
10/15/24	Webinar: Influenza Prevention and Control for Long-Term Care Facilities Training Time: 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. (CST) Registration Link: <a href="https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4139337362928177759">https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4139337362928177759</a>