

What Are Immunization Registries?

Immunization registries are confidential, population-based, computerized information systems that attempt to collect vaccination data about all children within a geographic area. Registries are an important tool to increase and sustain high vaccination coverage by consolidating vaccination records of children from multiple providers, generating reminder and recall vaccination notices for each child, and providing official vaccination forms and vaccination coverage assessments. One of the national health objectives for 2010 is to increase to 95% the proportion of children aged <6 years who participate in fully operational population-based immunization registries.

A "fully operational" registry includes =>95% enrollment of all catchment area children <6 years of age with 2 or more immunization encounters administered according to ACIP recommendations.

Children typically are entered into a registry at birth, often through a linkage with electronic birth records or at first contact with the health-care system. If a registry includes all children in a given geographical area and all providers are reporting immunization information, a registry can provide a single data source for all community immunization partners. Such a population-based immunization registry can make it easier to carry out the demonstrably effective immunization strategies (e.g., reminder/recall, AFIX, and WIC linkages) and thereby decrease the resources needed to achieve and maintain high levels of coverage. Immunization registries also can be used to enhance adult immunization services and coverage.

The concept of immunization registries is not new. Many individual practices and health plans have developed information systems to keep track of immunizations given to their patients. Often these are based on computerized information systems designed for other purposes such as billing. There also is a growing movement toward development of totally computerized patient medical records. These site- or plan-specific registries cover only immunizations administered by providers to covered patients. Only population-based immunization registries can provide information on all children and all doses of vaccines administered by all providers.