

## **Maine's Universal Immunization Program Frequently Asked Questions**

The following Frequently Asked Questions support medical and healthcare providers' understanding of the Universal Immunization Program, which is scheduled for implementation on July 1, 2026.

### **Are adults covered under this program?**

Yes. This program provides vaccines for to all adults ages 19-64 with Maine residency, including those who are uninsured, underinsured, privately insured, and those enrolled in MaineCare.

### **Do providers still need to screen for Vaccines for Children (VFC) eligibility?**

Yes. Eligibility status screening is still a federal/state requirement for every visit and has not changed.

### **How does this law affect how Medical Providers currently receive vaccines from the Maine Immunization Program (MIP)?**

State-supplied vaccines will be available for all children 0-18 years and adults 19 – 64 years. Physicians and other providers will continue working with MIP as before, using the same processes for ordering and receiving vaccines and doing the same quality assurance activities. Vaccines offered will be determined by the Maine Vaccine Board.

### **When does this program start?**

Vaccine distribution for children began in January 2012 while the vaccine distribution for adults will begin July 1, 2026.

### **Does the state purchase the nasal spray flu vaccine, FluMist?**

Yes. This vaccine is one of the types of flu vaccine that will be available through the Universal Immunization Program.

### **How will providers be compensated for the administration of vaccines?**

Since the assessment only covers the cost of the vaccine, providers will bill either the payers or the patients directly for vaccine administration fees.

### **What vaccines are covered by the Universal Immunization Program?**

Routinely recommended and approved vaccines for children and adults will be available at no cost to physicians and other providers. The Maine Vaccine Board (MVB) will determine

the list of vaccines to be made available. For a list of vaccines and presentations that will be available, visit the MVB website [here](#).

**How will this program affect patients?**

The intent is to remove common financial barriers, such as high insurance deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses, which can serve as obstacles for individuals in choosing care.

**Can I still bill the insurers normally for the vaccine administration fee?**

Yes. The vaccine administration fee is not affected by this legislation.

**What if a patient cannot pay the administration fee?**

You cannot deny administration of a state-supplied vaccine to an established patient because the child's parent/guardian/individual of record is unable to pay the administration fee.

**What is the Universal Immunization Program?**

The Universal Childhood Immunization Program was established by 2009 Public Law 595 to provide all children from birth until 19 years of age in the State with access to a uniform set of vaccines as determined and periodically updated by the MVB. Pursuant to 2025 Public Law 440, the program was expanded to include adults and renamed the Universal Immunization Program. Vaccine purchase is funded by an assessment on health insurance carriers and 3rd-party administrators registered under Title 24-A of the Maine Revised Statutes.

**Will healthcare providers still need to complete the required vaccine reports to public health in addition to the new tracking reports?**

Yes. The current program requirements will stay the same.

**Should I buy seasonal influenza and COVID-19 vaccines for next year?**

Yes, you should buy seasonal influenza and COVID-19 vaccines for adults 19 - 64 years for the 2026-2027 season. You do not have to buy these same vaccines for VFC-eligible children 6 months - 18 years since the VFC program will provide them to you. For the 2027-2028 season, the Universal Immunization Program will provide you with the influenza and COVID-19 vaccines for both children and adults.

**Will the types of vaccine be different between individuals with private health insurance and other individuals?**

No. The same vaccines will be available to all individuals.

### **Will vaccines be allocated?**

Not typically. If there is a national shortage or a vaccine is received in multiple shipments (like seasonal influenza vaccine), those vaccines will be allocated. Vaccine orders will continue to be monitored based on past usage and inventory to ensure that physicians and other healthcare providers have no more than 45 days of inventory at any given time. The goal is to make sure physicians and other healthcare providers have enough vaccine to vaccinate children and adults when they are in the office.

### **What if a vaccine is in shortage or not available through the universal program?**

In a bona fide shortage situation, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) makes vaccine available to states through an allocation process. Shortages mean limited supplies may be available, but the Maine CDC will make as much vaccine available as possible. In addition, the MVB has the authority to make temporary adjustments to the vaccine list to accommodate supply variations.

### **What if my office no longer wants to participate?**

Participation in the Universal Immunization Program is voluntary. This new legislation was designed to reach all children and adults in Maine. It is the goal of the MVB to implement this program in a way that allows all Maine healthcare providers to participate fully. Providers that choose not to participate may continue to purchase vaccines privately. The authorizing legislation for this program does not dictate whether health plans or other payers will continue reimburse providers for any privately purchased vaccines. Each health plan or other payer will make its own policy. Please contact the health plan directly for further information.

### **How can I participate?**

If your practice is already enrolled as a MIP provider, you will only need to complete the required [vaccine needs assessment](#). MIP will begin enrolling new adult providers April 2026. Further details regarding enrollment will be distributed to providers in the coming weeks during informational webinars. Please feel free to contact MIP for additional questions at [ImmunizeME.DHHS@maine.gov](mailto:ImmunizeME.DHHS@maine.gov).

### **What will providers have to do differently?**

All providers will be required to use the Maine's Immunization Information System to order vaccine and report doses administered either on a per patient basis or aggregate each month.

### **Will the state still be selecting the vaccines available, or will we have choices?**

As directed by statute, the Maine Vaccine Board determines the list of vaccines to be made available by the Program and will review the selection annually. This vaccine selection is done through the APA rulemaking process, and public input is welcome. You can submit questions or input to [ImmunizeME.DHHS@maine.gov](mailto:ImmunizeME.DHHS@maine.gov). For the list of vaccines that will be offered initially, please visit the website at: <http://www.MEvaccine.org>.

### **Are pharmacists able to participate in the program?**

Yes. Pharmacists may also enroll with the Maine Immunization Program to receive state-supplied vaccine for their patient populations who are covered by participating payers.

### **How does this program affect patients?**

Patients whose payers have opted into the program will not be charged for the cost of the vaccine; however, some patients may still be charged an immunization administration fee by their provider.

### **Will we need to separate our vaccines (insured/VFC) in the refrigerator?**

All state-supplied vaccines may be kept together.

### **What are the benefits to my office?**

- The Universal Immunization Program offers several benefits to healthcare providers. As a provider, you will receive state-supplied vaccines at no cost for all children and adults in your practice. Because your patients will be able to receive their immunizations in one place, this program can help you maintain continuity of care and receive its benefits:
- Fewer missed opportunities: Patients won't miss immunizations due to being referred elsewhere.
- Knowing if a patient is up to date for immunizations when treating them for other illnesses.
- No need for up-front purchase of vaccines.
- No need to keep two separate inventories of vaccines for children and adults.
- Access valuable public health resources for your practice:
  - Staff training.
  - Technical assistance on vaccine and immunization issues.
- Best practices in vaccine storage and handling:
  - Inventory management, temperature monitoring, and vaccine ordering.
- Information about new vaccines, schedules, and vaccine supply issues.

- Help measuring, promoting and achieving high immunization coverage rates for your practice.
- More combination vaccines will be available through this program:
  - Fewer needle sticks will be needed to fully vaccinate a patient.
  - Acceptance of more scheduled vaccines can be achieved.
  - Rates can be improved with the effective use of combination vaccines.

### **What will be the main changes to my office?**

The Maine Immunization Program will operate much the same as it currently does. Availability of state-supplied vaccines will be expanded to all children and adults, and more vaccine choices will be available. Vaccine ordering and accountability processes are expected to remain relatively the same. All providers who receive state-supplied vaccine will be required to use Maine's Immunization Information System (IIS) for ordering and vaccine accounting. Learn more about Maine's IIS on our [website](#).

### **How does the program impact my taxes?**

The program is not funded by taxpayers. The program collects the costs of vaccines and program expenses from insurers, third-party administrators, and other payers who are already obligated to pay healthcare costs for their beneficiaries. These funds are paid directly to the state so the state can purchase vaccines at federal contract rates. This lowers the cost to insurers of funding immunization services.

### **Could providers get vaccine for uninsured adults, funded by surplus funds, even if they don't opt in?**

Only enrolled providers are eligible for state-supplied vaccine. Enrolled providers would be eligible to vaccinate uninsured adults 19-64.

For additional questions, please feel free to contact the Maine Immunization Program at: [ImmunizeME.DHHS@maine.gov](mailto:ImmunizeME.DHHS@maine.gov).