

Immunization 2020

Modernizing Ontario's Publicly Funded Immunization Program



Table of Contents

1. About Immunization 2020	2
There Is More Work to Be Done	2
The Benefits of Collaboration	2
Patients First	3
A Call to Action	3
2. Taking Stock: Ontario's Publicly Funded Immunization Program Today	4
A Healthy Investment	4
A Strong Foundation	5
Opportunities for Improvement	6
Patients First	7
3. Immunization 2020: A Strategic Framework to Better Health for All Ontarians	8
Framework Components	8
How Will We Measure Success?	11
4. Immunization 2020: From Strategy to Action	12
Improve Access to Immunization	13
Connect System Partners	15
Inform the Public	17
Protect Health Through Continuous Quality Improvement	19
Cross-Cutting Actions	22
5. A Shared Commitment	24
Building Together	24

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

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can be obtained from
INFOline: 1-866-532-3161
TTY 1-800-387-5559

1. About Immunization 2020

Immunization is a critical part of a healthy lifestyle and health system. Vaccines prevent diseases, save lives, and reduce health care costs. In fact, vaccines are recognized as one of the most successful and cost-effective health investments known.

For generations, Ontario has had a strong, effective publicly funded immunization system. Our system provides access to programs and information that support the people of Ontario in making more informed immunization choices. Thanks to vaccines, infectious diseases that were the leading cause of death worldwide 100 years ago are now the cause of less than five per cent of all deaths in Canada.

Immunization 2020

is a first-of-its-kind roadmap for Ontario that will help our government and our partners achieve a high performing, integrated immunization system.

There Is More Work to Be Done

While we are proud of our accomplishments, we know there is always more that can be done. Ontario's immunization coverage is relatively high – however, it still falls short of national immunization targets and there are changing public attitudes and greater hesitancy about vaccines. The threat posed by vaccine-preventable diseases is still with us, as we have seen in recent outbreaks of measles, mumps and pertussis (whooping cough). An end-to-end modernization of our immunization system is in order. That is why we are launching *Immunization 2020 – Modernizing Ontario's Publicly Funded Immunization Program*.

Immunization 2020 is a first-of-its-kind roadmap for Ontario that will help our government and our partners achieve a high performing, integrated immunization system.

The Benefits of Collaboration

The development of Immunization 2020 is an excellent example of the benefits of collaboration. This strategic framework reflects the findings of the Advisory Committee for Ontario's Immunization System Review in its 2014 report, *Ontario's Publicly Funded Immunization System: Building on Today's Strengths, Innovating for the Future*. It also reflects recommendations made in the Auditor General of Ontario's *2014 Annual Report*. The framework builds on past consultations across Ontario's immunization system, including in-depth interviews with public health, primary care providers, and other experts; a comprehensive survey of hundreds of our stakeholders; and informal policy dialogues with the public and health care providers.



Patients First

Immunization 2020 builds on *Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care*, the next phase of Ontario's plan for changing and improving Ontario's health system.

At the core of the Immunization 2020 strategic framework is the patient. The framework outlines 20 priority actions to be achieved by the year 2020 – across the action plan's Access, Connect, Inform and Protect pillars – that are key for a stronger, more innovative immunization system.

A Call to Action

Immunization 2020 is a call for participation and action within our communities – inviting all of us to come together and work towards success. This framework provides a common platform for all immunization partners, supports a comprehensive approach to planning, and urges a system-wide approach to the immunization program. It focuses on new vaccines and technologies, and on ways of strengthening the current system. It also emphasizes the need to develop system-level performance measurement systems to monitor our progress and ensure accountability.

Together, we will make Ontarians healthier by reducing vaccine-preventable diseases through a high performing, integrated immunization system. The continued health and protection of our province's population depends on it.

2. Taking Stock: Ontario’s Publicly Funded Immunization Program Today

A Healthy Investment

There is an old saying that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” We all try to do things that will keep us healthy so that we can live a long, full life. For example, eating well and exercising help to avoid chronic health conditions like obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.

When it comes to many infectious diseases, prevention is achieved through immunization. Immunization is part of a healthy lifestyle and an investment in the health of both individuals and communities.

The Benefits of Immunization

Immunization prevents serious illness and saves lives

Publicly funded immunization programs have been incredibly effective at preventing diseases that would otherwise cause illness and death in our communities. Many diseases that were once common and devastating in Canada have now been eliminated or drastically reduced (see Figure 1).

In fact, each person’s decision to be immunized helps us make progress in reducing disease in our communities and improving the health of all people in Ontario.

How? When you decide to immunize, you protect yourself from serious diseases such as measles, meningitis and polio. Your immunization also benefits everyone around you by reducing the risk of disease in your family and community. “Herd immunity” develops when enough people in your community are immunized against a disease to prevent its spread.

Did You Know?

Immunization has saved more lives in Canada than any other health initiative in the last 50 years, and is widely acknowledged as one of the greatest achievements in public health.

Figure 1: Vaccines have significantly reduced many serious diseases in Canada

Disease	Cases in Canada in peak year, before routine immunization ¹	Reported cases in Canada in 2012 ²
Diphtheria	9,010	0
Haemophilus influenzae b (Hib)	671	23
Measles	61,370	9
Mumps	43,671	49
Pertussis	19,878	4,540 ³
Polio	5,384	0
Rubella	37,917	2
Tetanus	25	2

¹ Public Health Agency of Canada (2014). Canadian Immunization Guide (Part 1: Key Immunization Information > Benefits of Immunization). Evergreen Edition. Accessed 2015/06/24 at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cig-gci/p01-02-eng.php>.

² Public Health Agency of Canada (2014). Reported cases from 1991 to 2012 in Canada – Notifiable diseases on-line. Accessed 2015/06/23 at <http://dsol-smed.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dsol-smed/ndis/charts.php?c=yl>.

³ Outbreaks of pertussis (whooping cough) in 2012 contributed to the number of reported pertussis cases in Canada.

Immunization is great value for money

Immunization is one of the most cost-effective health interventions we have. By keeping people healthy and preventing disease, immunization reduces the burden on the health care system and has a positive effect on the economy.

- The high costs of doctor visits, trips to the emergency room, hospitalizations, medication therapy and outbreak management related to vaccine-preventable diseases are avoided.
- Fewer days are taken away from work or school to recover from illness, or to care for sick children and family members.

Did You Know?

Ontario's first publicly funded immunization program was introduced in 1882 against smallpox.

A Strong Foundation

Ontario has a long history of leadership in immunization, and continues to be on the forefront of innovative immunization policies and programs. For example:

- **Ontario was first in Canada to introduce school immunization laws:** In 1982, Ontario became the first province to pass laws requiring children to be vaccinated against certain diseases in order to attend school, unless they have a valid exemption. Similar laws were also passed for children attending licensed daycares. This legislation continues to protect children from serious vaccine-preventable diseases and reduces the risk of outbreaks.

- **Ontario launched first Universal Influenza Immunization Program in North America:** In 2000, Ontario initiated North America's first large-scale Universal Influenza Immunization Program. The program provides free influenza vaccine to anyone six months of age or older who lives, works, or goes to school in Ontario. In 2012, the program was expanded to improve access at community pharmacies through pharmacist-administered flu shots.
- **Public Health Ontario formed:** The creation of Public Health Ontario in 2007 has strengthened scientific advice on immunization as well as immunization surveillance and research activities.
- **Ontario implemented a central immunization information system:** Beginning in 2013, Ontario was among the first of the provinces to launch a new electronic database called Panorama. Ontario's public health units now use Panorama to more effectively track and analyze immunization coverage rates for school-aged children. This is a critical step in laying the groundwork for a provincial immunization registry for all Ontarians.
- **Ontario continues to expand its publicly funded immunization program:** Over the last twelve years, the number of routine publicly funded vaccines has almost doubled, from 8 to 15 vaccines. Ontario now publicly funds a total of 22 different vaccines as part of both routine and targeted high-risk immunization programs. These vaccines protect Ontarians against 16 diseases across their lifespan – diphtheria, tetanus, polio, pertussis (whooping cough), measles, mumps, rubella, varicella (chicken pox), rotavirus, meningococcal disease, *Haemophilus influenzae* type B, human papillomavirus (HPV), influenza, pneumococcal disease, hepatitis A and hepatitis B.

Opportunities for Improvement

Ontario has a strong immunization system that provides excellent value in protecting Ontarians from vaccine-preventable diseases. Yet, there are always opportunities to improve.

Immunization 2020 reflects the findings and recommendations of these recent initiatives:

- **Immunization System Review:** In 2012, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) initiated an Immunization System Review to identify opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Ontario's immunization system.

The review was led by an external Advisory Committee with a diverse range of perspectives and expertise in areas pertaining to the immunization system. The Advisory Committee's work also incorporated the voices of hundreds of stakeholders – involved in various aspects of the immunization system across the province – as well as advice from immunization experts from across Canada and around the world.

In 2014, the Advisory Committee provided its findings to the ministry in its report entitled *Ontario's Publicly Funded Immunization System: Building on Today's Strengths, Innovating for the Future*.

In its report, the Advisory Committee highlighted a number of pressures facing Ontario's immunization system, including:

- Changing public attitudes and greater hesitancy about vaccines
 - The growing number of new vaccines
 - An ever-evolving immunization schedule
 - The threat posed by imported cases of measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases related to global travel patterns
- **Auditor General of Ontario's 2014 Annual Report:** The Auditor General of Ontario's *2014 Annual Report* included a comprehensive value for money audit of Ontario's immunization program. In this report, eleven key recommendations were made, with topics ranging from the program delivery structure, information systems, immunization coverage data, communications and promotion of immunization, review and analysis of new vaccines, the Universal Influenza Immunization Program, vaccine safety reporting, and vaccine wastage.

Patients First

Immunization 2020 supports *Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care*, the next phase of Ontario's plan for changing and improving Ontario's health system. *Patients First* exemplifies our commitment to put people at the centre of the immunization system by focusing on these four pillars: Access, Connect, Inform and Protect.

- **Access:** Improve access to immunization services.
- **Connect:** Connect system partners to each other and to the resources they need to provide the public with coordinated and integrated immunization services.
- **Inform:** Inform the public – providing the education, information and transparency they need to make the right decisions about their health.
- **Protect:** Protect health through continuous quality improvement of our publicly funded immunization system – making decisions based on value and quality, to sustain the system for generations to come.

3. Immunization 2020: A Strategic Framework to Better Health for All Ontarians

Immunization 2020 provides a guide for decision-making, program planning and partnerships going forward. It will help us to better understand and monitor how our publicly funded immunization system is doing over time.

Our aim is to use Immunization 2020 to leverage the efforts of the many existing strategies, systems, agencies, communities, and individuals who are already doing so much to protect the public against vaccine-preventable diseases through immunization.

We want to use Immunization 2020 to establish a common lens for future discussion and collaboration, working together to accomplish things that are bigger than any one of us can do alone.

Framework Components

Immunization 2020 outlines a common vision, guiding principles, goals, and priority actions to be accomplished by the year 2020. This framework has been developed to guide our work in modernizing Ontario's publicly funded immunization program.

Immunization 2020 is a first-of-its-kind framework for Ontario.

Common Vision

Together, we will make Ontarians healthier for generations to come by reducing vaccine-preventable diseases through a high performing, integrated immunization system.

To achieve this vision, Immunization 2020 will require active engagement and partnership among public health, primary care, and other system partners. Although our specific individual contributions to supporting Immunization 2020 may vary, we all have a role to play to achieve broad, system-wide change.

Guiding Principles

The following eight principles – all grounded in Ontario's *Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care* – were selected to guide the development of Immunization 2020.

Through consultation across government – as well as with Ontario's public health, primary care, and other system partners – the guiding principles provide a shared approach for our ongoing work together to drive forward the actions identified in this strategic framework.



Our guiding principles will influence the ways in which Ontario develops policies, designs and delivers programs, uses data, and measures the effectiveness of Immunization 2020.

1. **A “Patients First” View:** *Patients First* is the province’s blueprint for the next phase of health care transformation. It is also our blueprint for Immunization 2020. To be successful, we need to put people and patients first by improving their experience with the health system and focusing on four key areas: Access, Connect, Inform, and Protect.
2. **Population-Focused:** Our framework sees to it that a critical portion of the public is immunized to reduce the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases and to protect vulnerable members of our communities.
3. **Evidence-Informed Choices:** We will use and generate evidence through research, evaluation and information from front-line health care providers and individuals to improve Ontario’s immunization system.
4. **Transparency:** We will listen to and gather input from all stakeholders to inform immunization system planning and delivery. We will consult our partners on what we are doing, and explain why we are doing it.
5. **Value in Health Care:** Maintaining a sustainable immunization system for generations to come means making performance-driven decisions based on value and quality.

6. **Innovation:** Breaking down barriers, tapping into creative minds and working collaboratively with our partners will lead to improvements in the quality, accessibility and sustainability of Ontario's immunization system.
7. **Shared Responsibility:** Strong commitment, accountability and leadership from all our partners and the people of Ontario are required to successfully support the modernization of Ontario's publicly funded immunization system.
8. **Health Equity:** As a priority, we are committed to reducing disparities in immunization coverage among the individuals and communities we serve.

Goals

In addition to establishing a common vision and principles, the framework is designed to achieve the following goals:

Goal #1: Informed, Confident Public

Individuals and communities value publicly funded immunization as both a right and a responsibility

Working with our partners across the province, we will achieve the following objectives:

- Support informed immunization decision-making
- Strengthen public confidence in the safety and effectiveness of vaccines
- Increase vaccine awareness and literacy
- Improve transparency of vaccine coverage rates
- Promote shared responsibility for immunization among individuals, communities, health care providers, and the public health system

Goal #2: High Quality Service Delivery

Ontarians are at the centre of an integrated and effective immunization system, with all partners contributing toward common goals

Working with our partners across the province, we will achieve the following objectives:

- Improve convenient and equitable access to immunizations for all Ontarians
- Leverage patient-provider interactions as an opportunity for immunization
- Increase health care worker immunization rates

Goal #3: Evidence-Informed and Accountable Programs

Immunization program planning and operations are evidence-informed and guided by continuous quality improvement to enhance performance, accountability, and sustainability

Working with our partners across the province, we will achieve the following objectives:

- Strengthen partnerships and engagement
- Support continuous quality improvement of Ontario’s publicly funded immunization program
- Improve system efficiencies and effectiveness
- Strengthen immunization data quality and information systems
- Improve consistency of immunization requirements
- Optimize use of evaluation and research evidence

Outcomes

The outcomes of Immunization 2020 are to effectively and efficiently achieve:

- Improved uptake of publicly funded vaccines among Ontarians
- Reduced health risks related to vaccine-preventable diseases in the province
- Better health for all Ontarians

How Will We Measure Success?

We are committed to creating a culture of continuous quality improvement.

Through development of a system-level performance monitoring framework, provincial immunization targets will be established, and all components of Immunization 2020 will be monitored toward achievement of our goals and outcomes. The 20 actions set out in this strategic framework will be measured and evaluated. The immunization system will be engaged in reflecting on practice, gathering evidence, improving performance, ensuring sustainability, and enhancing health – all with an unwavering focus on the patient, first.

The framework’s targets and indicators will enable us to know how much closer we are to achieving our vision – and to confirm that what we are doing is working.

4. Immunization 2020: From Strategy to Action

Immunization 2020 includes 20 actions that matter to Ontario’s publicly funded immunization system. Through this framework, Ontario is committed to building a stronger, more innovative immunization system to support better health for all Ontarians – one that puts Patients First while delivering the best value for money.

Immunization 2020: A Strategic Framework to Better Health for All Ontarians

<p>Guiding Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Patients First View • Population-Focused • Evidence-Informed Choices • Transparency • Value in Health Care • Innovation • Shared Responsibility • Health Equity 	<p>Common Vision</p> <p>Together, we will make Ontarians healthier for generations to come by reducing vaccine-preventable diseases through a high performing, integrated immunization system.</p>
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Goals • Informed, confident public • High quality service delivery • Evidence-based & accountable programs

Patients First Action Plan: Immunization 2020 Actions

- Access**
 - 1 Expand immunization delivery models
 - 2 Consider expanding range of immunization providers
 - 3 Review how vaccines are distributed to providers

- Connect**
 - 4 Equip health care providers with enhanced information, tools & support
 - 5 Facilitate understanding of provincial immunization schedules
 - 6 Engage stakeholders across Ontario’s immunization system
 - 7 Foster Knowledge Translation & Exchange (KTE)

- Inform**
 - 8 Launch a coordinated immunization communications strategy
 - 9 Enhance vaccine safety communications & reporting
 - 10 Provide immunization education in schools
 - 11 Expand public reporting of immunization & vaccine coverage

- Protect**
 - 12 Implement system-wide performance monitoring framework
 - 13 Strengthen public health unit compliance & legislation review
 - 14 Modernize review & approval process for consideration of new vaccines
 - 15 Maintain optimal vaccine supply
 - 16 Implement strategies to increase health care worker immunization
 - 17 Conduct regular immunization program evaluations

- Cross-Cutting Actions**
 - 18 Develop targeted health equity approaches for vulnerable communities
 - 19 Advance the vision of a provincial immunization registry
 - 20 Prioritize immunization research activities

Outcomes	Improved uptake of publicly funded vaccines among Ontarians	Reduced health risks related to vaccine-preventable diseases	Better health for all Ontarians
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Access

Improve Access to Immunization

- 1 Expand immunization delivery models
- 2 Consider expanding range of immunization providers
- 3 Review how vaccines are distributed to providers

To achieve targeted vaccine coverage, Ontario must have an integrated, person-centred service delivery system – **a system that makes immunization as accessible and convenient as possible** to the public.

Action #1: Expand Immunization Delivery Models

The current system: Ontario offers many models of delivery to facilitate convenient public access to publicly funded vaccines.

- **Primary health care providers administer the majority of immunizations in Ontario as part of a patient's routine care.** This is especially true in early childhood, when immunization is a pivotal link to other primary care surveillance and health promotion activities.
- **Local public health units provide school-based immunization clinics** to support convenient immunization services for adolescents.
- **The influenza vaccine** is offered through the Universal Influenza Immunization Program in a variety of settings, including: primary care offices, public health units, pharmacies, workplaces, hospitals, long-term care homes, retirement homes, community care access centres, and community health centres.

Immunization 2020 actions: We will explore additional models to optimize access and uptake at different life stages and remove potential barriers to immunization, such as through the use of pain management and other strategies. We will strengthen the primary care based service delivery model and explore new models to reach people where they are. For example:

- **Children:** We will look to offer additional vaccines and catch-up immunizations for school-aged children and adolescents through school-based immunization clinics.
- **Adults:** We will look to deliver immunizations for adults and seniors in community-based and health care settings. For example, we will consider additional opportunities for immunization before patients are discharged from hospital.

Action #2: Consider Expanding Range of Immunization Providers

The current system: In Ontario, vaccines are administered by physicians, nurse practitioners and midwives, as well as by registered nurses and registered practical nurses under appropriate medical directives. Provincial regulation passed in 2012 also enables trained pharmacists to administer the flu vaccine to Ontarians five years of age and older.

Immunization 2020 actions: As a first priority, we will explore options to enable pharmacists to administer travel vaccines so that Ontarians can receive them in their local pharmacies.

Action #3: Review How Vaccines are Distributed to Providers

The current system: Vaccines are challenging products to store and distribute. They must be maintained at certain temperatures throughout transportation and storage, up to the time they are administered. The Ontario Government Pharmaceutical and Medical Supply Service (OGPMSS) works closely with local public health units across Ontario to distribute vaccines using a variety of methods.

Immunization 2020 actions: We will review the current vaccine distribution system to identify opportunities to standardize vaccine delivery methods across the province, as well as improve timeliness of vaccine shipments to health care providers.





Connect

Connect System Partners

- 4 Equip health care providers with enhanced information, tools & support
- 5 Facilitate understanding of provincial immunization schedules
- 6 Engage stakeholders across Ontario's immunization system
- 7 Foster Knowledge Translation & Exchange (KTE)

Strong public support and confidence are critical to the success of Ontario's immunization system. It is **essential to connect all health care providers with the information, tools and supports they need** to help their patients make the best immunization decisions.

Action #4: Equip Health Care Providers with Enhanced Information, Tools and Support

The current system: Patients turn to their trusted health care provider for immunization information. Providers require information, tools and support to leverage patient-provider interactions to achieve “on time, every time” immunization uptake.

Immunization 2020 actions: We will develop comprehensive, user-friendly online resources to communicate the latest scientific information about vaccines, vaccine-preventable diseases, and immunization programs. We will also develop best practices, tools, and advice for improving the patient immunization experience.

Action #5: Facilitate Understanding of Provincial Immunization Schedules

The current system: Ontario's publicly funded immunization program includes 22 vaccines that protect against 16 different diseases. We regularly update the province's immunization schedules to keep them current with the latest scientific evidence. Ontario recently released a new, user-friendly version of the immunization schedules, together with accompanying resources including a revised “yellow immunization card.”

Immunization 2020 actions: We will take further steps to simplify the provincial immunization schedules and make them easier to understand. We will explore options for expanding use of the provincial immunization forecaster tool to enable the public and providers to identify the vaccines they still require. We will look to proactively send Ontarians reminder and recall notices for immunization.

Action #6: Engage Stakeholders Across Ontario's Immunization System

The current system: We engage with local public health units, Public Health Ontario, and other health care providers and stakeholders across the system in the implementation of Ontario's publicly funded immunization programs.

Did You Know?

According to a recent survey of immunization stakeholders in Ontario, 71 per cent said they would like to be engaged – and 82 per cent said they would like their organization to be engaged – in the planning and design of Ontario's immunization system.

Immunization 2020 actions: We will actively engage all stakeholders in a more structured and coordinated way in both the planning and the implementation of Ontario's immunization program. We will engage Ontario's immunization partners to reflect on practice, improve performance, and enhance support of continuous quality improvement.

Action #7: Foster Knowledge Translation and Exchange (KTE)

The current system: We know that, in order to reap the full benefits of research and evaluation, evidence needs to be translated into user-friendly information and tools, relevant to immunization planners and health care providers. We also need to share and disseminate information and tools locally and provincially, with both our internal and external partners.

Immunization 2020 actions: We will collaborate with Public Health Ontario and the research community to nurture a stronger focus on Knowledge Translation and Exchange (KTE), linked to a coordinated, provincial immunization research approach (see Action 20). Together we will connect our system partners with the information, tools, evidence-based guidelines, and best practices they need – on an ongoing basis – to optimize immunization services for the public.



Inform

Inform the Public

- 8 Launch a coordinated immunization communications strategy
- 9 Enhance vaccine safety communications & reporting
- 10 Provide immunization education in schools
- 11 Expand public reporting of immunization & vaccine coverage

When people are well informed and confident about the importance and safety of immunization, they view immunization as both a right and a responsibility. **To be successful, we need Ontarians to show up and want to be immunized.**

Action #8: Launch a Coordinated Immunization Communications Strategy

The current system: The communication of accurate, balanced and reliable immunization information to the public is as important – some say even more important – than the vaccines themselves. Today, the ministry, local public health units, and health care providers make immunization information available online to Ontarians.

Immunization 2020 actions: Working closely with partners, we will launch a coordinated immunization communications strategy with an interactive social media component. Our strategy will help us connect, share evidence-based knowledge and information about immunization, and provide the tools and support Ontarians need to make more informed immunization decisions.

Action #9: Enhance Vaccine Safety Communications and Reporting

The current system: Vaccine safety is a top priority in Ontario. Adverse events following immunization (AEFI) are reported and monitored through a surveillance process led by Public Health Ontario. Public Health Ontario conducts provincial analyses, and submits reports to the federal government to support its national safety surveillance and monitoring effort.

Immunization 2020 actions: Vaccine safety surveillance begins with patient engagement. Working with Public Health Ontario, we will develop resources to help patients identify and report potential AEFIs to their providers, who in turn report them to local public health units. We will also help providers inform patients of comparative risks between vaccine-preventable diseases versus the vaccines that prevent them.

Action #10: Provide Immunization Education in Schools

The current system: Ontario's public health units, schools and school boards work closely to ensure students are immunized according to provincial requirements for school attendance. In school-based immunization clinics, public health units provide adolescents with publicly funded vaccines. As part of these efforts, they also provide students and parents with broader immunization information.

Immunization 2020 actions: We believe by explaining the benefits of immunization to children and youth early in schools, they will make more informed immunization decisions when they become adults and parents. We will collaborate with the education sector to develop an immunization teaching module that public health units could offer to interested schools, explaining the history of vaccines, how the immune system works, and the benefits of immunization.

Action #11: Expand Public Reporting of Immunization and Vaccine Coverage

The current system: Public Health Ontario publishes an annual provincial immunization coverage report that summarizes vaccine coverage rates for school-aged children and adolescents at ages 7 and 17 according to international standards.

Immunization 2020 actions: We will look to expand public reporting by publishing immunization coverage rates on a local geographical basis (e.g., by public health unit, school or school board level), while maintaining privacy of personal patient information.

Did You Know?

Adolescents in Ontario are offered three publicly funded vaccines in school immunization clinics: hepatitis B, meningococcal, and HPV vaccines.



Protect

Protect Health Through Continuous Quality Improvement

- 12 Implement system-wide performance monitoring framework
- 13 Strengthen public health unit compliance & legislation review
- 14 Modernize review & approval process for consideration of new vaccines
- 15 Maintain optimal vaccine supply
- 16 Implement strategies to increase health care worker immunization
- 17 Conduct regular immunization program evaluations

Effective planning, operations and measurement form the backbone of Ontario's immunization program. These activities protect our health by **ensuring quality at every point in the immunization system** so that Ontarians can have confidence in our publicly funded vaccines.

Action #12: Implement System-Wide Performance Monitoring Framework

The current system: Today, we measure how well Ontario's publicly funded immunization program is performing by looking at the incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases, vaccine coverage rates, vaccine safety data, and vaccine wastage. In addition, we review specific performance indicators as outlined in the accountability agreements signed by Ontario's public health units.

Immunization 2020 actions: Working with our system partners, we will develop a system-wide performance monitoring framework, complete with indicators and targets (including vaccine coverage targets). The framework will support continuous quality improvement and will show us the progress made in each of the 20 actions set out in this strategic framework.

Action #13: Strengthen Public Health Unit Compliance and Legislation Review

The current system: Ontario has separate laws for schools and daycares requiring children in these settings to be immunized against certain diseases, unless they have a valid exemption. The legislation protects children from vaccine-preventable diseases that are easily spread in school and daycare settings, while reducing the risk of outbreaks. Public health units are responsible for assessing immunization records and following up to ensure immunization requirements are met.

Immunization 2020 actions: We will review existing legislation and policies as needed, starting with a focus on strengthening the vaccine exemption process to ensure parents are fully informed before deciding not to have their children vaccinated. We will also enhance monitoring of public health unit compliance with their legislated obligations including immunization record assessment and follow-up.



Action #14: Modernize Review and Approval Process for Consideration of New Vaccines

The current system: Ontario’s immunization planners and policymakers use a nationally recommended analytic framework to inform government decisions regarding publicly funded vaccines and eligibility criteria. This framework includes factors such as: scientific evidence, frequency and severity of disease in Ontario, cost-effectiveness, acceptability (including public and stakeholder perspectives), and equity/ethical and legal considerations. Scientific and technical advice is provided by various national and provincial committees, including: the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) and the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee on Immunization (PIDAC-I).

Immunization 2020 actions: We will renew the existing vaccine review process to improve transparency, timeliness and comprehensiveness. We will better inform the public and stakeholders about vaccines under review, the review timelines, and the review criteria. We will also explore options for streamlining the vaccine approval process with an eye to incorporating new evidence into existing immunization programs for the public as soon as possible.

Action #15: Maintain Optimal Vaccine Supply

The current system: Ontario has robust “cold chain” processes to maintain optimal conditions during the transport, storage and handling of vaccines. Each year, local public health units conduct a cold chain inspection of all health care settings where publicly funded vaccines are stored.

Immunization 2020 actions: Working with the Ontario Medical Association, the Ontario Pharmacists Association, professional regulatory colleges, and other partners, we will review Ontario’s cold chain inspection process and explore opportunities to further reduce potential vaccine wastage. We will also leverage the Inventory Management component of Panorama, the province’s immunization information system, to capture and standardize vaccine supply information across Ontario’s public health units and providers.

Action #16: Implement Strategies to Increase Health Care Worker Immunization

The current system: We recognize that, to make Ontarians healthier, we need to reduce the potential risk of vaccine-preventable disease transmission in health care settings. To this end, an Executive Committee of key stakeholders was recently established to review evidence and advise the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care regarding new approaches for improving health care worker influenza immunization.

Immunization 2020 actions: We will continue to build upon the gains we have made and the work of the Minister’s Executive Committee to improve influenza immunization rates of health care workers across Ontario.

Action #17: Conduct Regular Immunization Program Evaluations

The current system: Formal evaluations of Ontario’s immunization programs are done periodically, using a variety of measures. Comprehensive program evaluations are needed to inform future program improvements.

Immunization 2020 actions: In collaboration with Public Health Ontario and other partners, we will develop a systematic and coordinated approach to evaluating the province’s immunization programs. We will begin with a review and modernization of the Universal Influenza Immunization Program, the findings of which will inform future program improvements.

Cross-Cutting Actions

Cross-Cutting Actions

- 18 Develop targeted health equity approaches for vulnerable communities
- 19 Advance the vision of a provincial immunization registry
- 20 Prioritize immunization research activities

Based on the guiding principles proposed through Immunization 2020, **Ontario is committed to cross-cutting actions designed to create the conditions for success.**

Action #18: Develop Targeted Health Equity Approaches for Vulnerable Communities

The current system: Ontario's immunization system incorporates a range of outreach approaches and strategies to improve immunization rates across the population. We are committed to reducing disparities in immunization coverage across the communities we serve.

Immunization 2020 actions: We will apply the ministry's Health Equity Impact Assessment (HEIA) to the planning and evaluation of immunization programs, and link performance measures back to the HEIA. To better understand health equity gaps in Ontario, we will explore options to improve data collection of socio-economic status and other health equity data. We will work with stakeholders to develop strategies (and related indicators) to support targeted immunization of specific population groups, such as Aboriginal and newcomer populations.

Action #19: Advance the Vision of a Provincial Immunization Registry

The current system: In 2013, Ontario launched Panorama, a central immunization information repository. Panorama is a critical first step to achieving the province's vision of a provincial immunization registry – a single place where all administered immunizations are recorded and tracked. Panorama's initial focus is to record and track immunizations of school-aged children in Ontario.

Immunization 2020 actions: To advance our vision for recording and tracking the immunizations of all Ontarians, we will leverage Panorama's use of international immunization data standards and its capacity to support electronic linkages to other systems. We will explore options for Ontarians to access their immunization records through a secure, online portal. And we will look at opportunities to strengthen the role of health care providers in reporting immunization information to public health. In addition, we will use Panorama to conduct reliable analyses of vaccine coverage, vaccine safety, and vaccine-preventable diseases; to support inventory management; and to manage disease outbreaks when they occur.

Action #20: Prioritize Immunization Research Activities

The current system: The research we do helps us all do things better. Thoughtful, well-designed and relevant research provides answers to our questions, clarifies issues, informs decision-making, and helps us to be accountable to the people of Ontario. Today, Ontario's universities, research organizations, the vaccine industry, Public Health Ontario and others all carry out groundbreaking research in the field of immunization.

Immunization 2020 actions: Working with Public Health Ontario and the immunization research community, we will develop a planned and coordinated immunization research approach to reflect stakeholder priorities, inform policy and practice, and maximize system performance. As a first step, we will develop relevant provincial immunization research priorities that span all components of the immunization program, in consultation with our stakeholders.



5. A Shared Commitment

Building Together

There are many individuals, organizations and health care providers involved in running a high performing, integrated immunization system. Ontario's immunization program relies on the work of partners across the health system, in all areas of the province. Endorsing Immunization 2020 involves thinking about how the 20 actions articulated in this framework relate to you.

Everyone has a role to play in building up and strengthening immunization:

- All Ontarians, of every age
- Parents, guardians
- Children attending school and/or daycare
- Health care providers
- Public health professionals
- Government
- Academics
- Researchers
- Health economists
- Non-governmental organizations
- Industry
- Educators
- Communications experts
- Community groups and organizations

This strategic framework is a reflection of the power of stakeholder and public involvement in strengthening and improving our immunization system.

From advocating and championing immunization to our families, communities, and patients...

To making every patient-provider interaction an opportunity for immunization...

To identifying ever-more effective and efficient ways of doing things through ongoing feedback cycles...

YOU are involved in building up and strengthening immunization in Ontario. YOUR partnership is critical as we move forward together to bring Immunization 2020 to life.

