California Department of AGING

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State Health and Human Services Leaders Recommend Californians Catch-up with Routine Screenings, Vaccinations, and Check-ups

State also reminds Californians about availability of Medi-Cal health coverage

SACRAMENTO – The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted many facets of daily life, including routine health screenings, vaccinations, and medical check-ups. As the new school year approaches, more than one in eight children in California need to catch up on routine vaccines that were missed or delayed during the pandemic. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is also urging older Californians to get caught up with their cancer screenings.

"Schools are taking important steps to keep students safe and limit the spread of disease. Do your part to keep students healthy, in school, and ready to learn; make sure they are up to date with needed vaccines," said Dr. Tomás J. Aragón, CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer. "Many children missed routine checkups and immunizations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If you haven't done so already, check with your child's doctor to find out what immunizations they need, including COVID-19 vaccines and boosters."

Many vaccine-preventable diseases, such as whooping cough and measles, can easily spread in childcare and school settings. Students and staff with weakened immune systems are especially vulnerable, as are infants too young to be fully vaccinated. Currently there are measles outbreaks in every region of the world due to disruptions in vaccination campaigns during the pandemic. California's last large measles outbreak in 2015 was largely among unvaccinated individuals.

California law requires students to receive certain immunizations in order to attend public and private elementary and secondary schools as well as licensed childcare centers. Schools and licensed childcare centers are required to enforce immunization requirements, maintain immunization records of all children enrolled, and report students' immunization status to CDPH.

Families that are having difficulty obtaining required immunizations prior to the start of school can contact their local health department for help in finding a place to get needed immunizations.

Visit the www.ShotsforSchool.org CDPH page for information on immunization laws and required vaccinations for students in California. Local health departments and community organizations can use social media messaging and additional resources in the #DontWaitVaccinate toolkit to educate Californians about the importance of staying up to date on vaccination and routine screenings.

"Staying current and boosted with vaccinations and routine screenings are especially important for older adults," said Susan DeMarois, CA Department of Aging Director. "As we are all re-engaging with our friends, families, and communities, prevention is key."

Older adults needing additional information regarding vaccinations, screenings, or general resources may contact CDA's Adult Information Line at 1-800-510-2020 to be directed to your nearest Area Agency on Aging for local assistance.

Medi-Cal Health Coverage for Children
Children may enroll in Medi-Cal year-round, and immigration status does not matter. Medi-Cal provides free or low-cost pediatric services, including dental, vision, and behavioral health care, to children in need from families with limited income and resources.

"When state programs work together, they can reach more Californians and get them the care they need," said Jacey Cooper, State Medicaid Director and Chief Deputy Director of the Department of Health Care Services. "The Medi-Cal program is redefining how care is delivered, what leads to health equity and healthy communities, how to better hold the health care delivery system accountable for transparency, quality and results, and ultimately how the state achieves a healthy California for all, including our children."

Individuals may apply for Medi-Cal in person, by mail, by phone, or online. For more information, please view Ways to Apply for Medi-Cal.

California's Cancer Control Plan
Cancer is currently the 2nd leading cause of death in our state. An estimated 189,220 Californians will be diagnosed with cancer, and 60,970 will die of the disease in 2022 alone.

In an effort to raise cancer screening rates back to pre-pandemic levels, the California Dialogue on Cancer (CDOC) and the California Comprehensive Cancer Control Program under CDPH are promoting California's Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan, 2021-2025.

The plan is designed to enhance preventive efforts, present opportunities for collaboration, reduce duplication, and provide guidance. California's Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan includes primary prevention, early detection and screening, survivorship, as well as cross-cutting issues such as access to care, surveillance, and eliminating disparities.

More information is available at California's Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan and http://www.cdoconline.net

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Under the umbrella of the California Health and Human Services Agency, the California Department of Aging (CDA) administers programs that serve older adults, adults with disabilities, family caregivers, and residents in long-term care facilities throughout the State. These programs are funded through the federal Older Americans Act, the Older Californians Act, and through the Medi-Cal program. To promote the Department's goal of every Californian having the opportunity to enjoy wellness, longevity and quality of life in strong healthy communities, CDA actively collaborates with many other State departments (and other entities) on transportation, housing and accessibility, emergency preparedness and response, wellness and nutrition, falls and injury prevention, improving services to persons with dementia, reducing fraud and abuse and many other issues. To learn more, visit www.aging.ca.gov.