

Adult Vaccines

Outlook for 2023

NIAM update

August is **National Immunization Awareness Month** (NIAM), which emphasizes the importance of routine immunization for people of all ages. This year, NIAM also highlights additional trends to watch for, including the implications of the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency, the expansion of full vaccine coverage without cost sharing for Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, and the FDA approval of new vaccines.



IRA Provisions Expand Coverage of Vaccines

In January 2023, key Medicare-related vaccine provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA) went into effect, eliminating cost sharing for beneficiaries when receiving Part D vaccines. On October 1, 2023, the IRA's Medicaid-related vaccine provisions, which extend coverage for all ACIP-recommended vaccines without cost sharing to all adults with Medicaid coverage—not just the ACA expansion population—will go into effect.



End of Public Health Emergency

On May 11, the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency declaration expired, ending some of the policies put in place for its duration. When the US government's COVID-19 vaccine distribution program ends in fall 2023, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is launching the [Bridge to Access Program for Covid-19 Vaccines](#) to support access to these vaccines. Further, manufacturers requested FDA authorization of their updated COVID vaccines in June, which may be authorized under Emergency Use Authorization by the fall.¹

Initial 2023 data from *Vaccine Track* show some preliminary trends that may indicate immunization rates are improving and perhaps increasing to pre-pandemic levels.

- **Vaccine Track National Vaccine Trends.** First quarter of 2023 data seem to indicate that monthly vaccination rates are improving, with average monthly vaccination claims 14% higher than in the first quarter of 2019. With the end of the public health emergency in May 2023, this trend may become clearer through the end of 2023. It will be especially important to watch the trends in the fall when average monthly claims for vaccines tend to peak (October).
- **IRA Provisions and Medicare.** Initial 2023 [Vaccine Track](#) data show some preliminary increases in average monthly Medicare Part D vaccination claims. To fully understand if these data represent improvements in access to Part D vaccines because of the IRA provisions or a general return of vaccination rates to pre-pandemic levels, it will be important to review vaccination claims through the end of 2023 and beyond. Preliminary data show:
 - › Average monthly Medicare Part D claims increased in the first quarter of 2023 compared to the first quarter of 2022. Medicare Part B claims did not increase to the same extent during the same period, potentially pointing to impacts of the IRA.
 - › Average monthly Medicare Part D claims increased in the first quarter of 2023 compared to the fourth quarter of 2022. During the same period, average monthly Medicare Part B claims decreased, again potentially signaling impacts of the IRA.
- **IRA Medicaid Vaccine Provisions.** Medicaid coverage of all ACIP-recommended vaccines with no cost-sharing goes into effect October 1. Data for the last quarter of 2023 and first quarter of 2024 may start to show the impact of this policy on vaccine administration to Medicaid beneficiaries.

Implications: Heading into the fall, we may get a clearer picture of whether vaccination trends are returning to pre-pandemic levels. This will be the first respiratory virus season since both the end of the public health emergency and implementation of the IRA's expanded vaccine coverage provisions. Using [Vaccine Track](#) as a monitoring tool, policy makers can begin to assess the implications of these policy changes on public health goals.