



# KEEP TEXAS CHILDREN VACCINATED

## Immunizations are safe, effective, and save lives. They defend our families, community, and economy from infectious diseases.

Vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks are costly to our state and would further burden Texas' public health systems already heavily involved in the COVID-19 response.

- **VACCINE EXEMPTIONS ARE ON THE RISE.** Texas allowed conscientious vaccine exemptions beginning in 2003. These exemptions have tripled since 2010-11.<sup>1</sup>
- **SOME STUDENTS ARE MISSING REQUIRED SHOTS.** Some non-exempt students are still going to school without shots. Schools are inconsistently enforcing Texas' "no shots, no school" law, which requires a school to exclude students from attendance if they are missing one or more required vaccinations and don't receive them as fast as medically feasible.
- **KIDS FELL BEHIND ON VACCINES DURING COVID-19.** As a result of COVID-19, fewer parents took their children to well-child checks, preventing their child from staying on schedule with necessary vaccinations.

The Texas Vaccines for Children program provides vaccines for roughly half of children in Texas. According to the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), the number of Texas Vaccines for Children doses administered in April 2020 decreased substantially (-43%) compared to the same time in 2019. Rates began to rebound somewhat in May (-24%) and June (-14%) – but remain well below 2019 levels.<sup>2</sup>

- **POVERTY AND LACK OF HEALTH INSURANCE CONTRIBUTE TO MISSING VACCINATIONS.** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children who are uninsured and living below poverty level are most likely to be missing doses of recommended vaccines by their second birthday. The prevalence of being completely unvaccinated by age 2 is highest among uninsured children (4.1%), followed by Medicaid (1.3%), and privately insured (0.8%).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Texas Department of State Health Services. (2020). Annual Survey of Immunization Status, 2010-2020. Available at: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/coverage/schools/>

<sup>2</sup> Texas Department of State Health Services. (Sep. 2020). Impacts of COVID-19 on TVFC Vaccine Administration. Available at: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/docs/COVID19impactTVFC.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Hill HA, Yankey D, Elam-Evans LD, Singleton JA, Pingali SC, Santibanez TA. Vaccination Coverage by Age 24 Months Among Children Born in 2016 and 2017 — National Immunization Survey-Child, United States, 2017–2019. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) 2020;69:1505–1511. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6942a1.htm>



About **1 in 135** kindergarten students in Texas **are behind on measles shots**, the second-largest share of unvaccinated students on Texas campuses.<sup>1</sup>

## THE TEXAS PUBLIC HEALTH COALITION RECOMMENDS:

1. **Ensure "Parents Right to Know" de-identified, school campus level vaccine exemption rates are posted publicly on the DSHS website.**
2. **Support schools' ability to comply with vaccine admission requirements to protect all students from infectious diseases.**
3. **Require all medical exemptions from school vaccines to be signed by a physician licensed in Texas.**



# The Texas Public Health Coalition is a coalition of health professional organizations and health-focused organizations dedicated to disease prevention and health promotion.

401 W. 15th Street, Austin, Texas 78701 ■ [www.texmed.org/PublicHealthCoalition](http://www.texmed.org/PublicHealthCoalition) ■ [knowledge@texmed.org](mailto:knowledge@texmed.org)

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## MEMBERS

Alzheimer's Association	Texas Association of Community Health Centers
American Heart Association	Texas Chapter of the American College of Physicians Services
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas	Texas eHealth Alliance
Children's Hospital Association of Texas	Texas Health Institute
The Cooper Institute	Texas Hospital Association
Harris County Public Health	Texas Medical Association
The Immunization Partnership	Texas Nurses Association
It's Time Texas	Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
March of Dimes	Texas Osteopathic Medical Association
Methodist Healthcare Ministries	Texas Pediatric Society
Texas Academy of Family Physicians	Texas Physicians for Social Responsibility
Texas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics	Texas Public Health Association
Texas Academy of Physician Assistants	Texas Renal Coalition
Texas Association of City & County Health Officials	Texas School Nurses Organization
	Texas State Alliance of YMCAs
	United Ways of Texas

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## RESOURCES

CANCER PREVENTION AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TEXAS  
MD ANDERSON CANCER CENTER

MICHAEL AND SUSAN DELL CENTER FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
PARTNERSHIP FOR A HEALTHY TEXAS

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES