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DHS Provides Immunization Resources Ahead of Respiratory Virus Season

Statewide standing medical order for COVID-19 and flu vaccine issued

As respiratory virus season arrives, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has provided their immunization recommendations for flu, COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and a resource for vaccination providers. Once again in 2026, DHS has provided statewide standing medical orders for COVID-19 vaccines to improve access to vaccinations across the state, and for the first time ever, the state has also issued a medical order that can be utilized for the influenza vaccine.

As hospitals and health systems know, while the common respiratory viruses of flu, COVID-19 and RSV circulate all year, cases increase during the fall and winter months. DHS tracks and monitors these viruses year-round to inform health care providers, public health partners and all Wisconsinites about current virus activity and when risk of illness may increase. Respiratory illness activity is currently low across Wisconsin based on emergency department, laboratory testing and wastewater data.

The statewide standing orders for flu and COVID-19 vaccines issued by Dr. Ryan Westergaard, DHS Chief Medical Officer and State Epidemiologist for Communicable Diseases, will allow most Wisconsinites who want to be vaccinated to get vaccines at pharmacies across the state without a prescription.

According to the DHS release, most health insurance plans continue to cover recommended vaccines, although coverage can vary. Wisconsinites should consult their insurance provider to learn about coverage options. Anyone who does not have health insurance, or whose health insurance does not cover vaccines, can connect with the Vaccines for Children Program and Vaccines for Adults Program. Both programs will provide access to flu and COVID-19 vaccines.

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EDUCATION EVENTS

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Substance Use Disorders Management Boot Camp

Oct. 15, 2026

Culture College – Breakthrough Strategies for Creating and Sustaining a Magnetic Culture

Oct. 20, 2026

Wlpop Virtual Training: Session 1