

# Memorandum

**To:** Gold Coast Health Plan Primary Care Providers

**From:** Nancy Wharfield, M.D., Chief Medical Officer  
Kim Timmerman, MHA, CPHQ, Director of Quality Improvement

**Re:** **Vaccine Messaging to Parents During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**Date:** May 15, 2020

May is National Toddler Immunization Month. Gold Coast Health Plan (GCHP) supports the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for health care providers to continue prioritizing childhood immunizations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following messages are meant to reassure parents who are reluctant to bring their children in during the pandemic. Please adapt them as needed to reflect how your clinic is operating.

- 1. Emphasize the steps your practice is taking to keep patients and clinic staff safe:**
  - “We are taking several precautions to help keep our patients safe, including scheduling baby shot visits in the morning and only seeing sick children in the afternoon.”
  - “We’re screening everyone who comes into the office, including taking everyone’s temperature.”
  - “We disinfect our clinic twice daily and exam rooms after each visit.”
  - “We have designated areas of our offices to separate sick patients from healthy ones.”
  - “We all wear masks at all times.”
  - “We’re scheduling appointments so only one patient is at the clinic at a given time.”
- 2. Consider alternate ways to deliver care:**
  - “We can schedule a telehealth appointment, where I can address your questions and concerns over the phone or on the computer, followed by a brief immunization visit to help keep your baby safe.”
  - “Our clinic is offering ‘drive-thru’ immunizations, so you don’t have to enter our clinic.”
- 3. Reinforce the fact that vaccine-preventable diseases will continue to be a threat to children:**
  - “As a parent, I would not wait to immunize my baby. As your doctor, I am strongly recommending we help protect your baby from diseases that could cause harm during or after the pandemic.”

**4. Inform them that getting caught up on vaccines later may not be so easy:**

- “When California ‘reopens’, there may be many children who need to catch up on immunizations, increasing wait times for appointments. While waiting, they could be exposed to dangerous vaccine-preventable diseases circulating in the community. Let’s avoid that danger by keeping your child on track.”

**Additional Resources**

- [Afternoon Teach](#): An on-demand webinar on guidance for immunizations during the pandemic.
- [National Infant Immunization Week Toolkit](#): Resources from the CDC to promote childhood immunizations.

Thank you for continuing to serve our communities and protecting children during this difficult time. For more information, contact the Quality Improvement Department at [QualityImprovement@goldchp.org](mailto:QualityImprovement@goldchp.org).