

S. 4690, Maternal Immunization Enhancement Act

Senators Maggie Hassan and Bill Cassidy

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that pregnant patients receive a flu shot, as well as the tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap) vaccine, which helps prevent whooping cough in newborns and infants.

The flu is more likely to cause severe illness in pregnant women, including illness resulting in hospitalization, than in women of reproductive age who are not pregnant due to changes in the immune system, heart, and lungs during pregnancy. Receiving a flu shot during pregnancy is the best way to protect pregnant patients and their babies from the flu.¹ When pregnant patients receive a Tdap vaccine, antibodies are passed along to the baby that protect against whooping cough, which can be deadly for infants. This process provides short-term protection for the baby until they can receive their own Tdap vaccine at two months.²

However, many pregnant women – especially those covered by Medicaid – do not receive their recommended vaccines. A CDC survey found that only about half of pregnant patients received the flu and Tdap vaccines in 2017-2018.³ Another study found that in 2017, only 31.4 percent of pregnant Medicaid enrollees received the Tdap vaccine, and only 17.5 percent of pregnant Medicaid enrollees received the flu vaccine.⁴

The **Maternal Immunization Enhancement Act** works to increase Tdap and flu vaccination rates among pregnant women covered under Medicaid by:

- Directing the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, in consultation with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to issue guidance to States on ways to increase vaccination rates of ACIP-recommended immunizations among pregnant women enrolled in Medicaid. This guidance will include best practices for billing, counseling, and patient outreach and education.
- Directing the Secretary to include a quality measure in the Medicaid Adult Core Set and the CHIP Core Set that measures the prenatal immunization status of ACIP-recommended vaccines for pregnant women enrolled in Medicaid. This quality measure would provide critical information on the immunization rates of pregnant Medicaid enrollees.
- Directing the Government Accountability Office to submit a report to Congress with findings on the vaccination rates among pregnant women enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP. This report would include: an analysis of structural barriers, such as cost; demographic details on pregnant women enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP, including race, ethnicity, and geographic location; an analysis of reasons why pregnant women enrolled in CHIP or Medicaid do not receive vaccinations; and recommendations for legislative or administrative action on ways to increase vaccination rates among pregnant women enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP.

¹https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/qa_vacpregnant.htm#:~:text=Pregnant%20women%20should%20get%20a,by%20up%20to%20one%2Dhalf.

²<https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/pregnant/mom/get-vaccinated.html#:~:text=CDC%20recommends%20all%20women%20receive,part%20of%20this%20time%20period.>

³<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-managers/coverage/adultvaxview/pubs-resources/tdap-report-2017.html>

⁴[https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(19\)30207-7/abstract](https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(19)30207-7/abstract)