20 Years Later – the Final Issue of Vaccinate Adults

By Deborah L. Wexler, MD
Editor, Vaccinate Adults

This is your final issue of Vaccinate Adults, the Immunization Action Coalition’s (IAC) periodical for adult medicine specialists. Since 1997, I’ve been involved in every aspect of the 52 issues we’ve published, and I’d like to share with you some history of these 20 years – how Vaccinate Adults began, how it grew over the years, why we are saying goodbye, and what’s next. I would also like to thank some who have been deeply involved for many years in the work of Vaccinate Adults, making it such an inspired, successful, and long-lived publication for readers like you.

How we started…

Vaccinate Adults was preceded by IAC’s flagship periodical, Needle Tips, which made its first appearance in print in September 1994. The first issue of Vaccinate Adults was published in 1997, after it became apparent that Needle Tips wasn’t being utilized by adult medicine providers because of the preponderance of content related to childhood immunization. Our internal medicine colleagues recommended that IAC create a publication similar to Needle Tips, but containing only adult immunization material. The premier issue of Vaccinate Adults was printed and mailed to approximately 100,000 healthcare professionals throughout the United States in November 1997.

Following this premier issue, and through 2008, Vaccinate Adults was printed and mailed twice per year to internal medicine and infectious disease practices, pulmonologists, cardiologists, state and local health departments, and many others, with a circulation of up to 200,000.

According to IAC surveys, the most popular feature of Vaccinate Adults has been its “Ask the Experts” column, where experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provide answers to practical questions about hepatitis B and other routinely recommended vaccines.

From 1997–2008, we added a bit of levity to the cover of each issue by showing a singular cartoon drawing provided by the New York Department of Health but changing the dialogue bubbles to make an important point about an adult immunization topic. To further complement our serious content, we sometimes sprinkled funny riddles throughout issues, all of which were illustrated by my artistic children, Sarah, Isaac, and Leo, up until each left for college.

What’s new in the 2017–18 influenza vaccine recommendations pertaining to adult vaccination?

The 2017–18 ACIP influenza vaccine recommendations were published on August 25, 2017, and are available online at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/rr/pdfs/or6602.pdf. The new guidance:

- Describes the vaccine composition for this season (a change in the A/H1N1 component);
- Discusses recent FDA licensure and labeling changes including approval of Afluria Quadrivalent (Seqirus) and Flublok Quadrivalent (Protein Sciences); and
- Recommends that live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV, FluMist; AstraZeneca) not be used during the 2017–18 season.

Ask the Experts…continued on page 4 ▶

Printing and mailing costs became a problem…

By 2008, the cost of printing and mailing hard copies of publications had become too expensive compared to electronic distribution. As a result, CDC changed its policy and informed us that its financial support for printing and mailing Vaccinate Adults would be discontinued the following year, making it necessary for us to convert to electronic distribution only. The last printed edition of Vaccinate Adults was mailed in December 2008.

In 2009, Vaccinate Adults went online at www.immunize.org and we began building our email subscriber list. (All Vaccinate Adults back issues remain available at www.immunize.org/va/back-issues.asp.) We expanded the number of Vaccinate Adults subscribers and maintained them for many years in the work of Vaccinate Adults, making it such an inspired, successful, and long-lived publication for readers like you.

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Influenza vaccines

The Immunization Action Coalition extends thanks to our experts, medical officers Andrew T. Kroger, MD, MPH; Candice L. Robinson, MD, MPH; Raymond A. Strikas, MD, MPH, FACP, FIDSA; and nurse educators Donna L. Weaver, RN, MN, and JoEllen Wolicki, BSN, RN, all with the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

What’s In This Issue

20 Years Later – the Final Issue of Vaccinate Adults

- Ask the Experts: CDC Answers Your Questions
- Influenza Educational Materials for Patients and Staff
- Influenza Vaccine Products for the 2017–18 Influenza Season
- Screening Checklist for Contraindications to Influenza Vaccine
- Standing Orders Template for Administering Influenza Vaccine
- How to Administer Influenza Vaccines – Intramuscular, Intradermal, and Intranasal
- VISs Are Available in Many Languages
- Now in 7 Languages for Patients!
- IZ Schedule for Adults
- IZ Schedule for Pregnant Women
- Products You Can Purchase from IAC
- IAC’s Immunization Resources Order Form

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Why do we go to bed?

Leo Wexler-Mann

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Adults issues to four per year to increase its visibility and impact. Vaccinate Adults has always been available free of charge. Though subscribership rose over the years to approximately 40,000, Vaccinate Adults no longer reached the larger audience it had with postal mailings.

Why we are saying goodbye…

Our main website, www.immunize.org, and our weekly email news service, IAC Express, are better able to keep Vaccinate Adults readers up to date on IAC’s ever-expanding educational content and news. The gap of several months between Vaccinate Adults issues has rendered it too untimely to keep up with today’s fast-changing world of adult immunization.

Going forward…

Although Vaccinate Adults will be gone, IAC Express will carry on, bringing all Vaccinate Adults content to its readers on a weekly basis. News about recently updated ACIP recommendations, new vaccine licensures, Vaccine Information Statements, and CDC publications will be announced, along with articles about IAC’s free, downloadable CDC-reviewed educational materials for patients and clinic staff (e.g., standing orders templates and handouts for patients). At least five times per year, we will publish special editions of IAC Express that are exclusively “Ask the Experts” Q&As. If you’re not already an IAC Express subscriber, please visit www.immunize.org/subscribe.

Thank you!

Over these 20 years, I have been honored to work closely with so many wise, talented, and dedicated individuals to bring you every issue of Vaccinate Adults. Here are the names of those to whom I am most particularly indebted and about whom I have treasured memories that will never leave me.

CDC’s “Ask the Experts” Hall of Fame

Andrew Kroger, MD, MPH, medical officer at CDC’s National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), has served since 2012 as IAC’s key Vaccinate Adults contact for providing answers to all “Ask the Experts” questions. To do this, he works with NCIRD’s expert education team members who include medical officers Candice L. Robinson, MD, MPH, and Raymond A. Strikas, MD, MPH, FACP, FIDSA, and nurse educators Donna L. Weaver, RN, MN, and Stephanie L. Jakim, MD, Olmsted Medical Center

Margaret Vaillancourt, writer and community activist, who started IAC with me in 1991, devoted many years to Vaccinate Adults and IAC, providing lots of laughs and boundless energy. Margaret passed away in 2014.

Becky Payne, assistant to the director (me), served as editor, proofreader, finder of riddles, and devoted 14 years to IAC and to keeping watch over many aspects of Vaccinate Adults. We lost our dear Becky to a massive stroke in 2011.

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Subscribe to IAC Express, the Immunization Action Coalition’s e-news and information service at www.immunize.org/subscribe
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Current IAC staff

Diane Peterson, IAC’s associate director for immunization projects, associate editor, and master organizer has been always ready with the preliminary plan for each issue of Vaccinate Adults since she started working at IAC in 2002. Her Vaccinate Adults assignments are completed early so she can move to everything else she works on. Diane’s motto is “Let’s git ‘er dun.”

William L. Atkinson, MD, MPH, in addition to being IAC’s associate director for immunization education, in recent years has joined Diane as associate editor of Vaccinate Adults. He selects and develops “Ask the Experts” questions within days of our needing them, and sends them to Dr. Kroger at NCIRD. Bill completes his work with astonishing efficiency and accuracy. His home base is in Missouri, but we all hope that someday Bill will move to Minnesota.

Kathryn de Boer, IAC’s creative consultant for several years, works wonders at designing the most beautiful pages for displaying Vaccinate Adults content. She makes my job easy and working with her is a joy.

Many more IACers work on Vaccinate Adults, and all have contributed in important ways. Thank you to Teresa Anderson, DDS, MPH; Marian Deegan, JD; Mike Franey, PhD; Sheila Franey, MA; Crystal Mann; Jane Myers, EdM; Julie Murphy, MA; Casey Pauly; L.J. Tan, MS, PhD; Robin VanOss; Pat Vranesich, RN, BSN; and Laurel Wood, MPA.

And, of course, my family

Michael Mann, my dear husband of nearly 40 years, is so easy-going about my schedule and deadlines, and his presence is such a gift to me and our children.

Sarah Wexler-Mann, our first-born child, was IAC’s earliest illustrator featured in Vaccinate Adults. Sarah is now an organic hops and flower-growing farmer, communications director, graphic designer, and mom residing outside of Houston, Minnesota.

Isaac Mann, our second-born and second Vaccinate Adults illustrator, is now a painter and teacher of art students. He lives in New York City.

Leo Wexler-Mann, our third-born child, was IAC’s talented riddle illustrator until 2008. Leo has grown up to become a conservatory-trained pianist, composer, piano teacher, and podcaster, and he continues to draw. He also lives in New York City.

Mark Wexler, my father, who died in 2006, founded Medical Arts Press, a printing company in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I am a printer’s daughter. As a child, I spent time learning how to hand set lead type and, to my mother’s horror when she found out, how to hand-feed a printing press. Dad taught me about designing printed pages, the importance of white space, font choice, line spacing, and placement of art. When he received his copies of our periodicals in the mail, he would send them right back to me, covered with edits and advice so I would get it right in the next issue. Thank you, Dad.

And, finally, our readers

Thank you for reading Vaccinate Adults. Supporting you, the front lines of adult immunization in the United States, has been our priority. Your appreciative words over the years have enhanced our passion for our work. Thanks for writing to us. A sampling of your messages can be read online at www.immunize.org/aboutus/what_ntva.asp. We will miss hearing from you about Vaccinate Adults, but look forward to receiving your messages about IAC Express. Please keep in touch.

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