



March 24, 2014

ACNM is excited to announce a new initiative to improve vaccination rates in women. In February, we signed a joint letter to health care providers about the importance of influenza vaccine for pregnant and postpartum women. We are currently working with 2 new partners, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as part of the “Vulnerable Populations Planning” project, which aims to improve influenza outcomes among vulnerable populations, including pregnant women and racial-ethnic minorities. The project involves creating messages and resource materials to improve influenza and pertussis (Tdap) vaccination coverage in pregnant women who receive midwife-led care.

In December, ACNM invited members to participate in a survey about vaccines, and approximately 940 members responded to the survey. More than 80% of respondents reported that they either screen or provide immunization to their clients. Our members also identified areas where they could use vaccine information. These areas included the safety of vaccines (75%), talking points to use with clients (63%), contraindications/indications (62%), updates on the schedule (53%), and the state Immunization Information Systems (50%). Respondents said that barriers to offering vaccines reimbursement (57%), not enough interested clients (33%), and not enough storage space (38%). This project aims to address these areas and provide clear and concise information that will help to improve vaccine coverage.

Clinical safety studies have been conducted for decades on vaccines and pregnancy. Each vaccine must undergo rigorous clinical trials before it can be approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Immunization during pregnancy protects the woman, the fetus, and the newborn. As with any medication or procedure, there are risks with vaccines, but the absolute risk of serious harm is small. Side effects vary by vaccine, but the risk of severe side effects is lower than the potential complications from getting the disease. The safety of vaccines is widely accepted by the public health community.

ACNM has updated our position statement on immunizations for women and families, and a new position statement on immunization in pregnancy and postpartum is undergoing final review. Newly developed resources will be available on <http://www.midwife.org/immunization-recommendations> to assist midwives and women to make informed decisions. We hope we can count on our members to support this important vaccine initiative. You’ll be hearing more from us in the coming months.

Thank you for all you do for women, families, and communities.

Sincerely,

Ginger Breedlove, PhD, CNM, APRN, FACNM
President