

NEW YORK STATE IMMUNIZATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 3, 2026 MEETING
1:00 p.m.- 2:30 p.m.

Council Members: Dr. Debra Tristram, Elie Ward, Dr. Gus Birkhead, Dr. Govind Rao, Mary Koslap-Petraco, Paul Macielak

NYSDOH Staff Members: Kara Connelly, Dr. Vajeera Dorabawila, Anike Shaw, Jeremy Heisey, Kelly Brady, Lyndsey Hoyt, Dileep Sarecha, , Deborah Sobieszek Gia Dublino, Mari Sepowski, Rebecca Domalewicz, Ana Juras, Jennifer Wohlfarht, Ariela Zamcheck, Jonnie Martin, Barb Joyce, Aleef Rahman, Chelsea Cottrell, Eric Buckley, Avi Lekram, Rick Goldfarb, Elizabeth Boos, Lori Isabella-Rhoades, Delia Easton, Jonathan Karmel, Rick Goldfarb

NYCDOHMH Staff Members: Bindy Crouch

Invited Guest: Agenda Item	Discussion	Follow-Up
Welcome / Chair's Remarks: Dr. Debra Tristram	Open discussion on use of vaccine for children vaccine. Requirements say if the parent says they are Medicaid eligible but does not have paperwork, VFC vaccine can but used by screening the parents for eligibility. Division of Vaccine Excellence reiterated if a child is going to be excluded from school and the child is struggling to find/get a vaccine the local health department should be the first place contacted for help.	

Bureau of Vaccine Confidence / Rick Goldfarb	July 2026 the Division of Vaccine Confidence at the Department of Health started a vaccination learning peer workgroup with several local health departments to discuss best practices to encourage and assist in vaccination of Plain communities. The meetings have focused on measles specifically for the first two meetings due to current measles outbreak. There are roughly 35 counties who have joined at least one meeting. To help combat misinformation in the public, the Division of Vaccine Excellence is reorganizing its website, adding more resources and working with our Public Affairs Groups on social media. Right now the focus is on back-to-school vaccination and Covid and RSV vaccination. Representatives from New York City are also working on the topics the public health educators are working on to ensure vaccine positive messaging from New York City and New York State are clear that New York's vaccine policies have not changed. It was noted that if the Committee can be helpful with any Vaccine Confidence work, they would like to get involved.	
Kelly Brady, Director of the Bureau of School Immunizations	Discussion about Medical Exemption request increases in both New York City and in New York State. NYC has seen an increase in medical exemption requests, up 74% from this time last year. NYC reviews all Medical Exemption requests and makes a determination, for the rest of New York State, the Principal or person in charge of the school makes the final determination but the school can send documents to the Division of Vaccine Excellence for the state's recommendation as well. There has been a large increase of Medical Exemptions coming to the state for review, but the assumption is there are a lot of medical exemptions being accepted by school districts that the state does not review. The Bureau of School Immunizations sends out information each year to school districts explaining the medical exemption approval process. Links to all materials can also be found on the Division of Vaccine Excellence website. Schools report how many medical exemptions are in their school each year on the mandatory school immunization survey. So if many medical exemptions are reported, New York State auditors can reach out to the school to educate them to ensure they understand the criteria of what makes a medical exemption valid. When the Department of Health sends a recommendation to the school regarding a medical exemption, the state does not hear back if the exemption was accepted or denied so there isn't data available on how many are accepted other than the annual self-reported	

	survey. New York State has one of the strictest policies on what constitutes a valid medical exemption to keep our students safe from vaccine preventable disease. On May 15, Governor Hochul signed Chapter 115 amending PHL 2164 to allow the Commissioner of Health to adopt regulations for school entry utilizing nationally or internationally recognized sources of immunization schedules and practices. As a result, DOH is in the process of revising NYS regulations 66-1 to align with the American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) Recommended Child and Adolescent Immunizations Schedule for 18 Years of Age and Younger. Until the regulations are changed, schools must continue to use the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for school entry requirements. The regulation changes will move through the standard regulatory process and be posted for comments for 60 days. Schools were notified that the President's Executive Order regarding vaccine administration does not influence school immunization requirements in New York State.	
New York City Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene Update Dr. Crouch	New York City has been working hard to stay on top of any announcement from the Federal Government. NYC providers seem to be happy that the city DOHMH has endorsed the American Academy of Pediatrics, AAFP and American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists vaccine schedules. New York City has also done a lot of education to schools and providers that no changes have been made to the school immunization schedule. There are good resources available online for parents, AAP, Healthchildren.org, New York City continues to be an active part of the Northeast Public Health Collaborative. The city is holding steady at 6 measles cases; a lot of preparedness work is going on in case that number increases. New York City and the State will continue to work hand in hand to ensure we are providing consistent messaging.	
Sarah Hershey	Flu updates: Influenza activity and vaccine effectiveness was published in JAMA on June 17. They found that for all ages, overall vaccine effectiveness against emergency room and urgent care encounters was 35% and against hospitalization was 27%. For children, influenza effectiveness against emergency room and urgent care encounters was 38% and hospitalization was 27% for influenza A. Influenza B was not reported. For all adults, 34% effective against hospitalization, 33% for influenza A and 63% influenza B. It was a moderate to severe flu season. Antivirals were shown to be effective against these strains of flu.	

	There was an increase in cases starting in November with a peak in December and then a secondary smaller peak in March, which was mostly influenza B. It was a more severe season with hospitalizations than 24-25 but that year had longer sustained hospitalizations. Influenza recommendations for the flu season 26-27 have been released by all medical associations. Moderna has an MNRA flu vaccine that has been approved for this season, but supply may be limited this year. New York State anticipates it will be covered by insurance.	
NYSIIS Update Vajeera Dorabawila	Discussed what is new in NYSIIS, key data indicators in the primary 7 series, HPV, and MMR Coverage. NYSIIS has been doing data clean-up activities for reports that had been duplicated (different providers entering the same records) which helps ensure clean data metrics. Coming up soon, the Northeast Epidemiology Conference will be held in Albany this year November 5-6. There is public access portal that is being worked on with public data with county level information. Looking at the primary childhood vaccine rate indicators, small dip in 4313314 combination series coverage by 2-year-old children, likely due to a lot of the reasons we have talked about in this meeting, hesitancy etc. There has been a slight increase in HPV vaccine rates. There has been a slight decrease in MMR rates for younger children from 2025 to 2026. A slight increase in rates for 6–18-year-olds. The increase could be from previous vaccinations and doesn't necessarily mean more vaccinations being given to more individuals.	
Lucinda Caruso, Vaccine for Children	Ordering has been opened for flu vaccine through VFC and VFA programs. A lot of providers have reached with interest in ordering. Ordering for RSV monoclonal antibodies was suspended briefly as CDC needed to release more for ordering but that is back up and running. There's no indication there will be any shortages in any products. Committee member noted that they were unable to get any families to request the Covid vaccine last year.	
New Business: Dr. Debra Tristram	Meetings set for 2026: October 29, 2026 (Revised to November 12 due to conflicting Department of Health Meeting.	
Adjournment:	The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.	