

School-entry Requirements for HPV Vaccination

What's known

For more than a decade, school-entry requirements for HPV vaccination have generated substantial discussion.

- Since 2006, 40 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have proposed legislation to require HPV vaccination for school entry, fund HPV vaccination administration programs, or educate the public or school children about the benefits of HPV vaccination.¹
- Five jurisdictions require families to vaccinate their children (boys and girls) against HPV or receive an exemption before starting a particular grade: Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. Opt-out provisions vary.¹
- A national, web-based survey of parents or guardians of 11- to 17-year-olds found that 38% of parents or guardians agreed with laws requiring HPV vaccination for school attendance without exemptions. When including exemption provisions, parental agreement increased to 45% for philosophical reasons, 50% for religious reasons, and 59% for medical reasons.¹
- A systematic review of 36 studies from 2009-2022 assessing the association between policies and HPV vaccination coverage among adolescents (defined as ages 9-18 years in this study) in the United States found consistent positive associations between school-entry requirements and HPV vaccination uptake.
 - School-entry requirements for other vaccines had positive spillover effects for HPV vaccinations.²

What's new

Ongoing discussions of school-entry requirements explore the ethical, political, and legal implications of these policies.^{3,4} Such debates are likely to continue as clinical and behavioral studies inform policy initiatives to improve HPV vaccination rates and help reduce HPV cancers.

- A study using National Immunization Survey–Teen data from 2008-2017 found that levels of HPV vaccination initiation in girls was significantly higher (32%) in Rhode Island after vaccination school-entry policies were implemented compared with pre-policy levels. Similar increases were noted for post-policy HPV vaccination initiation in boys in the District of Columbia (16%) and Rhode Island (17%) compared with pre-policy levels.⁵
- In 2018, jurisdictions with school-entry requirements had higher HPV vaccination rates (District of Columbia, 71%; Virginia, 55%) compared with the nation overall (51%). In 2022, national HPV vaccination rates increased to 63%, closing the gap (District of Columbia, 78%; Virginia, 63%).⁶

What's next

Further consideration of school-entry requirements for HPV vaccination may be important for some states, and the broader literature on school entry requirements can provide guidance.⁷

- Consider whether current HPV vaccination rates are high enough to support school entry requirements.⁷
- Strategies for financing and implementation may be needed.⁷
- Have definitions for exemptions and how they will be used.⁷
- Strategies may be needed for addressing stakeholder concerns, including if the new requirement will put existing entry requirements at risk.⁷
- Consider whether enacting or tightening entry requirements for other adolescent vaccines will have spillover effects for improving HPV vaccination rates.¹

References

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The American Cancer Society National HPV Vaccination Roundtable convenes, communicates with, and catalyzes member organizations to increase HPV vaccination rates and prevent HPV cancers.

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