

**Clinician role in boosting immunization**

Dear Colleagues,

[National Immunization Awareness Week](#) (April 26-May 2) is an important opportunity to recognize one of the great successes of modern medicine: vaccination. Immunization remains a cornerstone of public health in Canada and worldwide — preventing illness, protecting communities, and, in some cases, eliminating devastating diseases altogether.

Early in my medical career, working in Africa, I witnessed firsthand the profound and tragic effects of vaccine-preventable diseases. Children and families bore losses that were entirely avoidable. I never imagined that, decades later, I would again be contending with outbreaks of preventable illnesses such as measles in a high-income country with reliable access to safe, effective vaccines. Yet here we are — and that reality demands renewed focus and leadership.

**Continuing need for awareness**

Vaccination has transformed population health. Infectious diseases that once accounted for the majority of deaths in Canada now represent a small fraction, thanks largely to immunization. Globally, measles vaccination alone has prevented tens of millions of deaths over recent decades. These are remarkable achievements — but they are not guarantees. Protection depends on consistently high vaccine coverage across all communities.

Despite broad public confidence in vaccines, immunization rates still fall short of what is needed to prevent disease spread. Federal, provincial and territorial partners have set clear national goals to increase coverage, particularly for children, supported by significant investments in education, surveillance, outreach and national public awareness initiatives led by the Government of Canada.

**Empathy, evidence and advocacy**

As clinicians, we play a critical role. Trusted conversations, proactive follow-up and consistent messaging make a measurable difference. This week is a reminder to review immunization status, address concerns with empathy and evidence, and advocate for timely vaccination.

By keeping immunizations up to date, we protect not only individual patients, but also infants, elders and those who cannot be vaccinated. Together, we can prevent needless illness and ensure a healthier future for Alberta and Canada.

Kind regards,

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