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MMWR study looks at drop in child vaccination coverage during pandemic

MOBILE, Alabama — The Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) from the Centers of Disease Control & Prevention has published a study concerning the decline in child vaccination coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data from the Michigan Care Improvement Registry show vaccine coverage has declined among most children ages younger than or equal to 2 years in May 2020 compared to previous May estimates going back to 2016. The report said providers should use their electronic health records and immunization information systems to identify children who have missed recommended vaccinations, work with families to schedule in-person appointments, and assure parents that strict infection control practices are in place.

“During the COVID-19 crisis, many families have not seen their providers to keep up with routine checkups and vaccinations,” said Dr. Tonya Dobbs, a pediatrician at Family Health’s Eight Mile Health Center. “It is very important for children to stay up to date on their vaccinations. These vaccines protect from a number of infections that can cause illness and sometimes death.

“Also, the concern is that delays in vaccinations may result in secondary outbreaks of vaccine-preventable illnesses. We are urging families to contact their primary care providers if their children are not up to date on recommended vaccines.”

The report concluded that as the nation continues efforts to mitigate transmission of COVID-19, disruption of essential health services might occur, including in outpatient settings. The observed declines in vaccination coverage might leave young children and communities vulnerable to vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles.

The full report can be found on the CDC website at https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6920e1.htm?s_cid=mm6920e1_w. To make an appointment with a Family Health provider, please call 251-690-8889.

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