

Hospital Quality Improvement

Collaborators:

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FAQs: Immunization Information Systems (Registries)

Q: What is an IIS?

A: An Immunization Information System (IIS) is typically an internet-based system where the immunizing provider documents patient immunization records. The records can then be obtained without requests, faxes, etc. Most Immunization Information Systems provide a comprehensive management tool in a single online platform. Each system may look or function differently depending on the state that developed the system.

Q: What type of management tools?

A: An IIS can provide individualized records of a patient's immunization history, vaccine brand, need and timing of upcoming vaccines, any documented precautions/contraindications, and any history of severe reaction. An IIS can also print a patient's immunization history, as well as reports of needed immunizations or school records. The system can run practice level reports for specific search criteria (age, vaccine type, etc.), recall/reminder reports to identify patients who need specific vaccines, and print reminder letters. An IIS can also assist with planning vaccine ordering. It has an inventory system that can document required vaccine information in the patient record, and assist in tracking doses given or wasted. That information is usually required when reporting or ordering doses of governmentally supplied vaccines (e.g., COVID-19, vaccines for children, etc.). Some systems have additional features such as announcements and billing codes.

Q: Doesn't entering all of that information take time?

A: Utilizing the system to look up a patient's immunization history is not difficult or time consuming. The time saved in calling other providers, securing permission, or faxing documents to others is significant. Hand entering an entire record in the system usually takes a few minutes. However, many electronic health records (EHR) now have unilateral (will upload batches of patient/immunization information), bilateral (will upload and receive patient/immunization information), and real time (unilateral/bilateral) patient/immunization information. The two systems can talk to each other so the patient/immunization information is in both systems.

There are some practices that do not have an EHR, or their EHR lacks the ability to provide real time updates. Manually entering a patient's records into the IIS, printing school reports, and letting the system calculate the next vaccine due, etc. is far faster and more accurate than handwriting reports or using a calendar to calculate doses due.

Q: Does every state or region have an immunization registry?

A: No, but most do. Each state also has its own laws and rules defining the personnel permitted to enter immunizations in the system, as well as the patient populations that must be included. Some states require every dose to every individual be entered, while other states mandate entry of all child immunizations, but are discretionary for adults. For a list of Immunization Information Systems and contacts, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/iis/contacts-locate-records.html>

Q: Is there a cost to participate?

A: There is no cost for set up, training, or participation, and help lines are available. For interfacing, both the EHR and IIS must have specific settings and configurations enabled. If the EHR configuration or interface requires changes, there may or may not be a cost. Any cost would depend on the contract between the practice and their EHR provider.

Q: What are other benefits?

A: By accessing patient (or staff) records quickly and easily, a facility can avoid giving unnecessary doses. This will save money, save inventory, and improve patient satisfaction. Additionally, using the reminder system can identify patients and staff needing doses of a specific vaccine, and allow the provider to utilize a short-dated vaccine. This same feature can be used to identify who will need specific vaccines in the future and assist with planning vaccine orders.

Q: How can I get more information or register?

A: Contact your state IIS. Their information can be found at:
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/iis/contacts-locate-records.html>

More technical information can be found at:
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/iis/about.html>

The CDC created a quick overview of IIS basics: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/iis/downloads/basics-immun-info-sys-iis-508.pdf>