

Bridging Gaps in Long-Term Care Vaccination

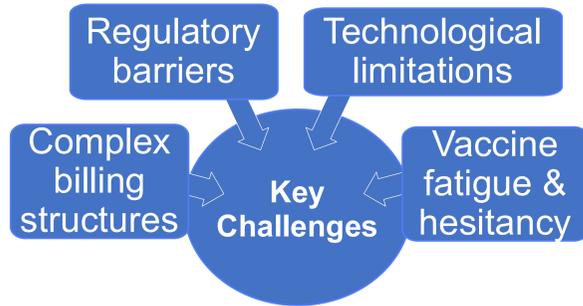
A Multi-Stakeholder Approach to Addressing Barriers and Building Trust

Pfizer • Parasol Health Consulting, LLC • NCPA Innovation Center • NCPA LTC

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Background and Objective

Long-term care (LTC) facilities face significant challenges maintaining optimal vaccination rates among residents and staff following the end of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) in May 2023.



Objective: Examine critical barriers to LTC vaccination programs & develop actionable strategies to improve immunization rates and subsequent outcomes in vulnerable populations

Methods

Expert Roundtable: April 22, 2025, Alexandria, Virginia

Participants: LTC experts including pharmacists, physicians, advanced practice providers, infection preventionists, and healthcare administrators

Methodology: Structured facilitated discussions to identify barriers, emerging themes, and evidence-based solutions for closing gaps in immunizations in the LTC setting

Analysis: Qualitative synthesis of expert consensus to develop comprehensive implementation strategies for vaccinations in LTC

Findings – Critical Barriers

1. Trust-Based Communication Crisis

- Trusted healthcare practitioners more effective than facility leadership in addressing vaccine hesitancy

2. Vaccine Fatigue & Complexity

- Growing complexity of adult immunization schedules (influenza, COVID-19, pneumococcal, RSV, shingles) creates confusion

3. Collaboration Gaps

- Unclear ownership for vaccinations in LTC leads to gaps in uptake; pharmacists should be empowered to lead and collaborate

"It's not enough to simply distribute educational materials—we need genuine, face-to-face conversations that build trust."

- Jonathan S, PharmD

Systems Level Challenges

4. Technology Deficiencies

- Most LTC EHRs lack integration with state immunization information systems (IIS), limiting interoperability

5. Billing & Administrative Barriers

- Complex reimbursement across Medicare Parts A, B, D, and Medicare Advantage creates confusion

"Interoperability remains a huge challenge. We need reliable data exchange between state immunization registries." - Chad W., PharmD

"Streamlining billing is key. A unified electronic platform would simplify things for everyone involved."

- Jeanne M., PharmD

Study Population Impact

LTC residents represent one of the most vulnerable populations in healthcare:

- 1.3 million nursing home residents nationwide**
- High-risk** population for infectious diseases
- Suboptimal** current vaccination rates post-PHE
- Complex** care coordination needs

"Vaccination rates among both residents and staff remain suboptimal, with vaccine fatigue and hesitancy compounding the problem." - Jonathan S, PharmD

Strategic Recommendations

Empower Trusted Messengers: Train physicians, Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), pharmacists, and infection preventionists as educators with culturally relevant messaging

Institutionalize Best Practices: Integrate vaccination into intake and care transitions; schedule regular clinics for vaccinating eligible LTC residents

Address Funding Gaps: Advocate for LTC-specific policies supporting infrastructure and simplified reimbursement

Streamline Systems: Simplify billing across Medicare components; improve EHR-IIS integration and automation

Prioritize Education: Create accessible, culturally relevant materials to provide education on vaccine recommendations and improve vaccine confidence

Build Partnerships: Foster collaboration between pharmacists and all LTC healthcare stakeholders

Toolkit Framework

Seven Areas for Action

Immediate Actions

- Education & Communication
- Vaccine Prioritization and Implementation to All Eligible Residents and Staff
- Technology, Data & Reporting
- Address Vaccine Hesitancy

System Improvements

- Billing & Administrative Processes
- Family & Staff Engagement
- Continuous Improvement & Resource Sharing

Conclusions & Implementation

Key Insight: Trust remains the strongest tool for vaccination success in LTC settings.

Success requires building sustained trust through partnership between pharmacists and all stakeholders in the healthcare infrastructure. This multi-faceted approach provides a practical roadmap for protecting vulnerable LTC populations while strengthening community public health outcomes.

Impact: Comprehensive implementation framework addresses systemic, operational, technological, and relational gaps in LTC vaccination programs.

Next Steps: Dissemination of toolkit resources and continued multi-stakeholder collaboration to implement evidence-based strategies nationwide.