

Back to the Office Campaign

Resource Toolkit

Resources for Providers and
Organizations to Promote
Wellness & Preventative care

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Promoting Pediatric Wellness

Introduction:

We recognize that during the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been many changes to pediatric practices. Many pediatricians have had to make adjustments to office processes and policies, such as scheduling, and modifying exam and waiting room areas to reduce the potential exposure and spread of COVID-19. Practices are monitoring and assessing the effects of these changes regularly and often adjust what they have done to meet current needs, limitations and evolving guidelines. We know that every practice is different and must decide when and how to open their offices to patients in the safest ways possible.

With guidance from the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) the Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (LA AAP) began offering guidance to its members and pediatricians throughout the state on ways to continue to safely care for their patients in the midst of the pandemic. The LA AAP has worked with LDH throughout the pandemic in order to provide flexibility and clarity around pediatric care and practice guidelines.

In a **March 21, 2020** [memo](#), the Louisiana Department of Health directed providers to transition all in person healthcare to telehealth when medically appropriate and the same standard of care can be met as in a face to face visit. Providers were also required to postpone all in-person healthcare visits which could safely be delayed for 30 days. Many LA AAP members reached out seeking advice on how this applies to well-child visits.

On **March 25, 2020**, the LA AAP published [Guidance from LA AAP on Continuation of Well Child Visits During COVID-19 Pandemic](#). The guidance underscores the importance of well child visits, especially during the first 24 months of life, and offered suggestions for adjustments a practice may consider making to their usual clinical operations.

On **April 1, 2020**, the LA AAP published "[Updated Guidance from LA AAP on Well Child Visits and Immunizations During COVID-19 Pandemic](#)" The LA AAP reaffirmed its guidance and support for well child and immunization visits, especially during the first 24 months of life. The LA AAP shared the concern of its members that postponing immunization visits could increase the risk of a communicable vaccine preventable disease outbreak in the midst of the response to this pandemic until children and families are able to catch up their immunization status.

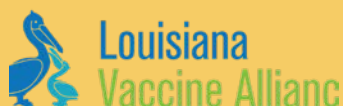
On **April 20, 2020**, LDH issued a [revised order](#) for medical and surgical procedures with an effective date of April 27, 2020. On **April 24, 2020**, following inquiry from the LA AAP, LDH issued a [Clarification Message: Allowable Medical, Surgical and Dental Procedures: Update](#). The clarification message specifically states, "Preventive procedures/visits can be deemed time-sensitive if performed with recommended preventive and social distancing precautions (i.e. dental cleanings, well child visits)."

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On **April 30, 2020**, LDH revised [Informational Bulletin 20-5](#) to include language around the use of telehealth for well child visits. Specific language is below.

Effective for dates of service on or after March 5, 2020, the use of telemedicine/telehealth to perform clinically appropriate components of Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) preventive services for members older than 24 months of age will be allowed. Essential components of an EPSDT preventive service visit that are impossible to perform via telemedicine/telehealth (e.g., a complete physical exam, vision and hearing screenings, fluoride varnish, laboratory tests, and immunizations) can be performed during an in-person interperiodic visit at a later date when limitations on non-emergent clinical care are lessened.

Coding for EPSDT preventive services completed through telemedicine/telehealth and interperiodic visits:

- Telemedicine/telehealth visit: Normal EPSDT preventive services code by age (99381- 99385, 99391-99395) with telehealth modifier (95), reduced services modifier (52), and place of service (02).
- In-person interperiodic visit: Normal EPSDT preventive services code (99391-99395). The telemedicine/telehealth visit providing partial components of the EPSDT preventive services visit is reimbursed at 75% of the normal rate. The complete in-person interperiodic visit that occurs at a later date will be reimbursed at 100% of the fee on file.

Episodic and sick care (e.g., CPT codes 99212-99215) may be delivered by telemedicine/telehealth to members of all ages, as long as the same standard of care can be met as an in-person visit. For EPSDT preventive services and episodic and sick care, the overall Medicaid telemedicine/telehealth policy applies including, but not limited to, telecommunication system recommendations, originating site, distant site, and reimbursement rates. As always, providers must maintain the usual medical documentation to support reimbursement of the visit.

Guidance for reducing infection risk while conducting in-person well-child visits is available from the Louisiana AAP (<https://www.laaap.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Guidance-fromLA-AAP-on-Continuation-of-Well-Child-Visits-During-COVID.pdf>) and guidance specific to vaccine administration during the COVID-19 pandemic is available from the Office of Public Health (<http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3891>). Please continue to monitor LDH policies and professional organization clinical guidance, as updates and resources are subject to change as the pandemic response evolves.

This toolkit builds on the work that has been done thus far and is meant to provide pediatricians with easy to use resources to reach out to families. LA AAP believes in the value and importance of the well child visits and the role preventative care has to keep children healthy.

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Template letter to families

Providers can use the letter below as a customizable template to send to families encouraging them to return to the office for well child visits and vaccinations. To download an editable version, visit:

<https://www.laaap.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/BackToTheOffice-TemplateLetterToFamilies.docx>

Hello from [Insert Practice Name]!

We hope that this note finds you and your family safe and healthy! We want to thank you for being flexible and understanding as we adjust office protocols to keep patients and families as safe as possible during this unprecedented pandemic.

Currently, stay at home orders from Governor John Bel Edwards are still in place but with some modifications to allow for healthcare visits. These changes allow us to increase our ability to keep our patients healthy and on track for regular checkups. To this end, we have adopted some new practices such as [insert changes made such as separate healthy/sick hours and rooms, triage in parking lot, telehealth, etc]. It is our goal to see every patient that needs our services in a timely manner.

For patients who require an appointment for a “non-contagious” issue, please call our office to discuss the necessity of an in-person appointment. This includes wellness visits and visits for non-contagious infections. If it is safe and appropriate, appointments may be delayed or conducted through telehealth. If an in-person visit is necessary, please rest assured that we are taking extra precautions in cleaning of all equipment and examination rooms and limiting your contact with others.

For children ages 2 and under, it is especially important to maintain regularly scheduled well check appointments and stay up-to-date on immunizations despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Well child visits and vaccinations for young children are necessary to monitor early growth and help them build immunity to preventable diseases. If your child is behind on vaccinations or is due for a vaccine in the near future, please call our office to schedule an appointment. If you are unsure if your child is up to date or in need of a vaccine, please call and ask our office staff to check their record.

For patients who are sick and require an in-person visit, please call our office to schedule an appointment during sick-patient hours. We request that sick patients be accompanied by ONE healthy parent or guardian and, if possible, that no siblings be brought along to the office. If appropriate, we may avoid in-person visits and treat patients through telehealth.

We have developed the following protocols for sick visits:

[discuss specific procedures for sick patients such as calling at arrival and remaining in vehicle until stay in car until you have further instructions, payment and forms online, etc.]

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These measures are temporary and are in line with guidance from the CDC and LDH. Policies will be adjusted as needed to follow direction by LDH and the CDC. We believe that the policies discussed above will help to maintain the best health environment for all of our patients.

Sincerely

[Insert Practice Name]!

Communications Examples for Providers

Sample Messages for Staff to Call Parents:

On track vaccinations:

“Hi! This is (name) from (practice). I am calling to touch base regarding your child’s wellness visit and vaccinations. It is very important to stay on track with these appointments, as missing them can lead to issues later down the road. Although the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing, we are doing everything that we can to ensure the health and safety of our patients. Please give us a call if you have any questions or if there is anything that we can do for you. See you soon!”

Newborn appointments:

“Hi! This is (name) from (practice). I am calling on behalf of everyone at (practice name) to congratulate you on the arrival of your baby. We are so thrilled for you and your family! As you may know, newborn checkups and on-time administration of vaccines are very important. Although the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing, we encourage you to keep your scheduled appointments or schedule one if you haven’t already done so. Please let us know if you have any questions or if there is anything that we can do for you. See you soon!”

COVID-19:

“Hi! This is (name) from (practice). I hope that you and your family are in good health and staying safe. I am just calling to let you know that all of us at (practice name) are thinking of you. We are here to support you during this unprecedented time. We have modified our practice policies to minimize our patients’ exposure to others. So please let us know if you have any questions or if there is anything else that we can do for your family. Although the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing, we are still seeing patients in the office or by telehealth when appropriate, so if you have any patient care concerns, please let us know. We hope to see you soon!”

Sick-child visits:

“Hi! This is (name) from (practice). I am calling to share some news with you regarding the services that we are offering to our patients. Although the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing, we are continuing to treat sick patients in a variety of ways. We

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are offering telehealth visits for concerns that can be treated virtually, or, if need be, in-person visits are available as well. For those children who need an office visit, we have modified our practice policies to minimize office exposure to others. Please don't put off getting medical attention when your children need it. Give us a call if you have any questions or if there is anything that we can do for you. Take care!"

Sample Language for Social Media Posts:

The time is now!

Immunizations are key to maintain children's health. If your child is scheduled for a routine vaccination, don't wait! Contact our office now!

Stay on track with vaccinations!

Washing your hands and social distancing help prevent COVID-19 and routine immunizations help prevent many other dangerous illnesses. Contact us to learn about available vaccination options.

Well child care is important, even during a pandemic.

Wash your hands often and contact us to discuss regular well child visit options.

Don't delay! Even during social distancing, children need checkups.

Well child visits and routine immunizations are important, especially now. Children keep growing and it's important that they stay on track with checkups and vaccinations. Contact us to see what checkup options are available.

We are here for you!

By phone, through telehealth or in person, we are here for you. Call us today to learn about what options are available for your child's visits and vaccinations.

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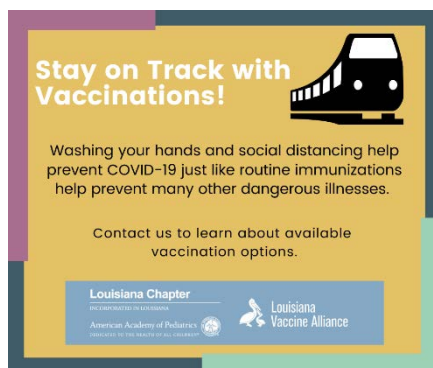
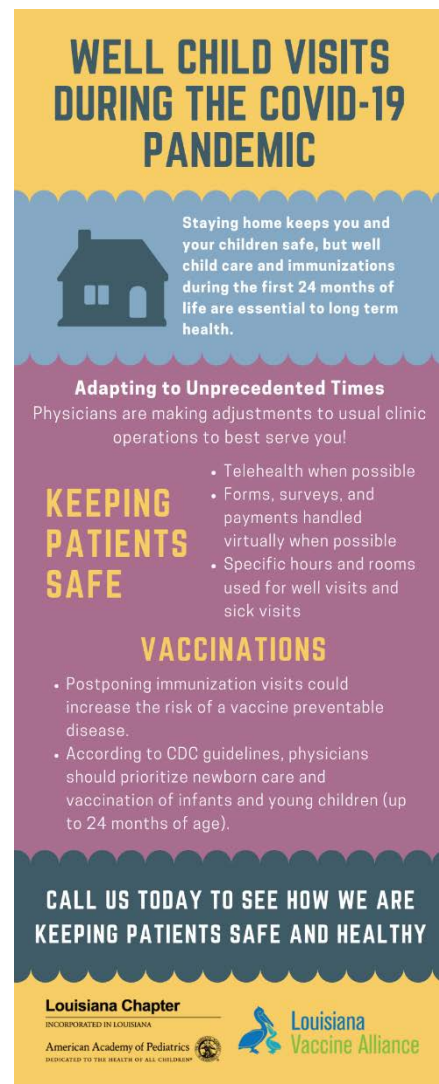
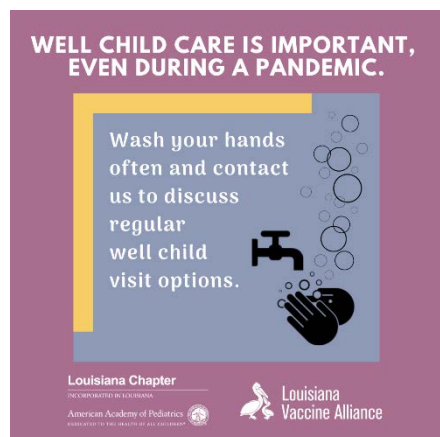


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Sample Images to use on social media. Click on each image to download.



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Communications Examples for Organizations

Sample Language for Social Media Posts:

The time is now!

Immunizations are key to maintain children's health. If your child is scheduled for a routine vaccination, don't wait! Contact your pediatrician's office now!

Stay on track with vaccinations!

Washing your hands and social distancing help prevent COVID-19 and routine immunizations help prevent many other dangerous illnesses. Contact your child's pediatrician to learn about available vaccination options.

Well child care is important, even during a pandemic.

Wash your hands often and contact your pediatrician to discuss regular well child visit options.

Don't delay! Even during social distancing, children need checkups.

Well child visits and routine immunizations are important, especially now. Children keep growing and it's important that they stay on track with checkups and vaccinations. Contact your child's pediatrician to see what checkup options are available.

There when you need them!

By phone, through telehealth or in person, your child's pediatrician is there for you. Call them today to learn about what options are available for your child's visits and vaccinations

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Sample Images. Click on each image to download:

WELL CHILD VISITS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Staying home keeps you and your children safe, but well child care and immunizations during the first 24 months of life are essential to long term health.

Adapting to Unprecedented Times
Physicians are making adjustments to usual clinic operations to best serve you!

KEEPING PATIENTS SAFE

- Telehealth when possible
- Forms, surveys, and payments handled virtually when possible
- Specific hours and rooms used for well visits and sick visits

VACCINATIONS

- Postponing immunization visits could increase the risk of a vaccine preventable disease.
- According to CDC guidelines, physicians should prioritize newborn care and vaccination of infants and young children (up to 24 months of age).

CHECK WITH YOUR CHILD'S PEDIATRICIAN TO SEE HOW THEY ARE KEEPING PATIENTS SAFE AND HEALTHY

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Louisiana Department of Health
AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana
Healthy Blue
Louisiana healthcare connections
UnitedHealthcare

We are here for you!

The Right WAY
The Right PLACE
Right NOW!

By Phone
Telehealth
In-Person

Call your child's pediatrician today to learn about what options are available for well child visits and vaccinations!

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WELL CHILD CARE IS IMPORTANT, EVEN DURING A PANDEMIC.

Wash your hands often and contact your pediatrician to discuss regular well child visit options.

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Stay on Track with Vaccinations!

Washing your hands and social distancing help prevent COVID-19 just like routine immunizations help prevent many other dangerous illnesses.

Contact your child's pediatrician to learn about available vaccination options.

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AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana

Even during social distancing, children need check ups!

Well child visits and routine immunizations are important, especially now. Children keep growing and it's important that they stay on track with checkups and vaccinations.

Contact your child's pediatrician to see what checkup options are available.

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THE TIME IS NOW!

Immunizations are key to maintain children's health. If your child is scheduled for a routine vaccination, don't wait!

Contact your child's pediatrician now!

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Promoting Adult Wellness



Routine Vaccination of High-Risk Adults during the Coronavirus Pandemic

As you know, all adults need certain vaccines to help protect themselves and those around them from common and serious diseases. However, factors such as age and specific health conditions put some of your adult patients at higher risk for diseases and complications than younger, healthier adults. Patients with chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and lung disease are at increased risk of developing serious complications from vaccine-preventable diseases, including long-term illness, hospitalization, and even death. Therefore, the Louisiana Immunization Program strongly recommends that providers continue vaccinating high-risk adult patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. This prioritized group should also include women in their third trimester of pregnancy, adults who may need vaccinations due to occupational hazards, and adults engaging in behaviors that would put them at increased risk for contracting an infectious disease.

Health care providers can help ensure the safety of their high-risk adult patients when providing vaccinations during the COVID-19 pandemic by considering the implementation of the following precautions:

- Schedule patient visits so that sick patients arrive after the patients only needing vaccinations.
- If not able to separate the timing of patient visits, then take steps to separating patients spatially. Place patients with sick visits in different areas of the clinic or another location from patients with well visits.
- Establish different entrances in your clinic where sick and well patients may enter. Clearly mark entrances for patients considered to be at higher risk for COVID-19.
- Collaborate with providers in the community to identify separate locations for holding appointments for high-risk adults needing to be vaccinated.
- Generally lower the number of patients on site at any one time. Possibly close a waiting room or registration area and have patients check in by phone from the parking lot.
- Tell patients who are ill to use telemedicine or a phone call, thus not coming into contact with those seeking vaccinations at the clinic.
- Tell patients to drive to the clinic and wait in their car, initially, while staff goes outside to check on them.
- Give vaccinations to patients seated in their car. Maintain proper hygiene and waste disposal practices outdoors just as you would indoors. Remember to follow all Storage and Handling safe practices.

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- Screen all patients for high-risk symptoms.
- Refer high-risk adults to pharmacies who can give vaccines at less busy times to keep them safer.

As your adult patients' most valued and trusted source of health information, you have the power to protect them from vaccine-preventable diseases. You should take every opportunity to discuss and help your high-risk adult patients get vaccinated during the pandemic to maximize their protection from common, preventable infectious diseases.

Resources:

Adult Vaccination Information for Healthcare and Public Health Professionals (CDC)

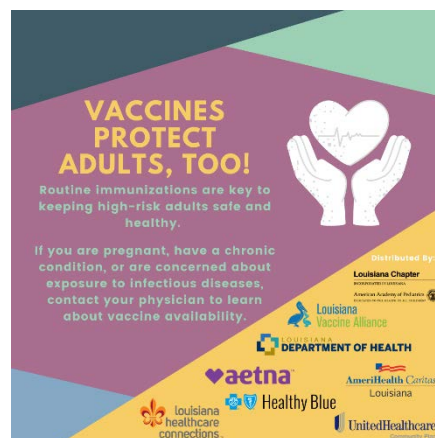
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/adults/index.html>

Sample Language for Social Media Posts:

Even during social distancing, it's important to vaccinate! Patients with chronic conditions are at increased risk of developing serious complications from vaccine-preventable diseases. Therefore, it's important that high-risk adult patients continue with routine vaccinations, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Contact your physician to see what vaccination options are available.

Vaccines protect adults, too! Routine immunizations are key to keeping high-risk adults safe and healthy. If you are pregnant, have a chronic condition, or are concerned about exposure to infectious diseases, contact your physician to learn about vaccine availability.

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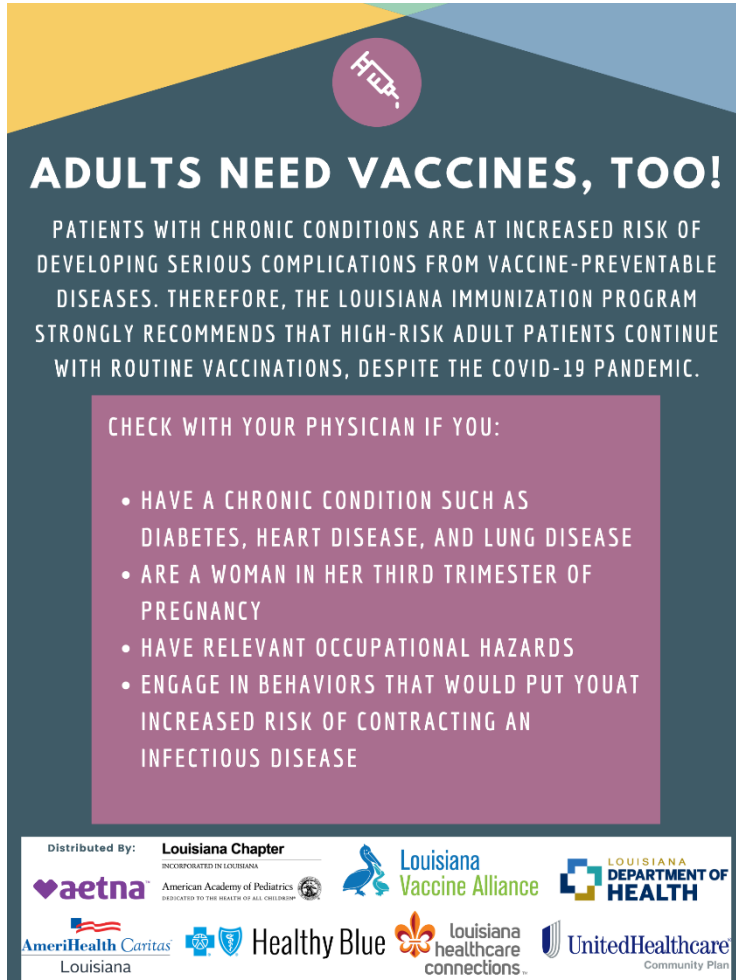
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ADULTS NEED VACCINES, TOO!

PATIENTS WITH CHRONIC CONDITIONS ARE AT INCREASED RISK OF DEVELOPING SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS FROM VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES. THEREFORE, THE LOUISIANA IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT HIGH-RISK ADULT PATIENTS CONTINUE WITH ROUTINE VACCINATIONS, DESPITE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

CHECK WITH YOUR PHYSICIAN IF YOU:

- HAVE A CHRONIC CONDITION SUCH AS DIABETES, HEART DISEASE, AND LUNG DISEASE
- ARE A WOMAN IN HER THIRD TRIMESTER OF PREGNANCY
- HAVE RELEVANT OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS
- ENGAGE IN BEHAVIORS THAT WOULD PUT YOU AT INCREASED RISK OF CONTRACTING AN INFECTIOUS DISEASE

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VACCINATIONS FOR HIGH-RISK ADULTS DURING COVID-19

Patients with chronic conditions are at increased risk of developing serious complications from vaccine-preventable diseases. Therefore, the Louisiana Immunization Program strongly recommends that high-risk adult patients continue with routine vaccinations, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Are you at High Risk

Check with your physician if you:

- Have a chronic condition such as diabetes, heart disease, and lung disease
- Are a woman in the third trimester of pregnancy
- Have relevant occupational hazards
- Engage in behaviors that would put you at increased risk of contracting an infectious disease

Adapting to Unprecedented Times

Physicians are making adjustments to usual clinic operations to best serve you!

CHECK WITH YOUR PHYSICIAN LEARN ABOUT AVAILABLE OPTIONS FOR ROUTINE VACCINATIONS.

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COVID-19 Resources:

Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Coronavirus Resource page:
<https://www.laaap.org/coronavirus-resources>

Louisiana Vaccine Alliance:
www.lavaccinealliance.com

American Academy of Pediatrics Critical Updates on COVID-19:
<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/>

Healthy Children: <https://healthychildren.org/English/Pages/default.aspx>

Louisiana Department of Health COVID-19 Main Page:
<http://ldh.la.gov/Coronavirus/>

Louisiana Department of Health Coronavirus COVID-19 Guidance & Resources
<http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3878>

Louisiana Immunization Program:
<http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3689>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
<https://www.cdc.gov/>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

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