

COLORADO PEDIATRIC PROVIDER TOOLKIT

Caring for Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic



*Resources for providers to promote
pediatric wellness, preventative care, and
immunization*

MAY 2020



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Caring for Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Provider Role

Dear Child Health Care Provider,

Now more than ever, we share with you a commitment to maintaining the health and safety of Colorado's children. We also share a commitment to supporting you and your delivery of pediatric care during this unprecedented time.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we know that your challenges are many, including combatting the virus itself while still addressing ongoing child health-related issues among your patients. All this, while also adjusting your practice and policies to keep your office open in the safest way possible for the infants, children, and adolescents whom you serve.

AAP Colorado, Immunize Colorado, and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment strongly support you and your continued provision of health care for children, both sick and well, during the COVID-19 pandemic. As you are keenly aware, the recent reductions in well-child visits threaten the wellbeing and optimal health of Colorado's youngest population due to delayed vaccination, screening, referrals, and delivery of anticipatory guidance to families.

In an effort to support you and your patients during these challenging times, we have produced the **Colorado Pediatric Provider Toolkit**, complete with modifiable templates for you to:

- Let your patients know that your practice is open, safe, and still there for them
 - o Sample [letter to families](#)
 - o Sample [postcard](#) and [office poster](#)
 - o Sample [phone call scripts](#) and [text messages](#)
- Ensure your community knows that well-child checks and immunizations remain essential for infants, children, and adolescents
 - o Sample [social media posts and graphics](#)
 - o Template [letter to the editor](#)
 - o Template [media pitch](#)

These templates and tools are for you to customize according to local guidelines, as well as to the characteristics unique to your patient population. We hope that the easy-to-use resources within the **Colorado Pediatric Practice Toolkit** will assist you in your continued efforts to reach out to families, validate the importance of well-child visits and vaccinations, and emphasize the role you play together in keeping children healthy now and always.

Sincerely,

Meghan Treitz, MD, FAAP
President, AAP Colorado

Stephanie Wasserman, MSPH
Executive Director, Immunize Colorado

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Connecting With Families

Template Letter to Families

Pediatricians and other pediatric care 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. Download an editable version [here](#).

Hello from [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.

As you probably know, Colorado guidelines have transitioned over recent weeks as we've "flattened the curve" in our state. Current guidance encourages Coloradans' access to necessary health care visits. These necessary visits include regular checkups (to track healthy growth and development) and routine immunization visits (to protect children and prevent outbreaks of vaccine-preventable disease).

Your family's health and safety is our primary concern! As such, we want to make you aware of our office's new protocols and additional safety precautions.

At [practice name], we have made some big changes within our office setting. We have [insert changes made such as separate healthy/sick hours and rooms, triage in parking lot, telehealth, enhanced disinfecting between visits, physical distancing in waiting rooms, screening of staff, etc.].

We've also adjusted our protocols for patient visits. For all visits, please call our office at [XXX-XXX-XXXX] so that we can find the best way to address your child's needs. We request that ONE healthy parent or guardian accompany patients to all in-person visits. We ask that you avoid bringing additional children to in-patient appointments at this time. When you visit our office, you'll notice that we've made adjustments to the following: [insert changes such as new no-touch (or physically distanced) check-in procedures, staggered appointment times, universal masking, removal of toys, books, and magazines, enhanced cleaning of all high-touch surfaces, virtual check-out procedures].

- **For patients with a "non-contagious" issue**, appointments may be offered through telehealth or be scheduled during our in-person well-child visit hours [insert hours here].
- **For patients who are sick**, appointments will be offered during our in-person sick-patient hours [insert hours if standardized]. We have developed the following protocols for sick visits: [discuss specific procedures for sick patients such as calling at arrival and remaining in vehicle]



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Connecting With Families

Template Letter to Families cont.

until you have further instructions, payment and forms online, etc.]. If appropriate, appointments may be offered through telehealth.

- **For children ages 2 and under**, appointments will be offered during our in-person well-child visit hours [insert hours here]. We have developed the following new protocols for well-child visits: [discuss any adjustments here]. We encourage you to maintain your well-child appointment schedule during this important stage of your child's development. These visits allow for assessment of your child's growth, tracking of your child's milestones, and maintenance of immunizations to protect your child from vaccine-preventable disease. If your child is behind on immunizations (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 your child's immunization records.

Please know that these measures are in line with current guidance from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). Policies will be adjusted as needed to comply with guidance and regulations. We are confident that the policies discussed above will help to maintain the best health environment for your family and all of our patients.

Sincerely
[Insert Practice Name]!



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Connecting With Families

Sample Phone Call Scripts

Below are sample scripts you can utilize in phone calls to patients. You may also consider recording a message for your office voicemail or on-hold notification relaying any office protocols and precautions your staff is taking to make in-person appointments safe for families.

WELL VISITS AND ON-TRACK VACCINATIONS

“Hi! This is [name] from [practice name]. I am calling to touch base regarding your child’s wellness visit and vaccinations. [Provider name] thinks it is very important to keep these appointments to assess your child’s growth, track their milestones, and make sure they are up to date with the immunizations necessary to protect them from vaccine-preventable disease. 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 name]. 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 to protect the health of your new little one. Although the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing, [provider name] and all of us here 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!”

GENERAL CHECK-IN

“Hi! This is [name] from [practice name]. I hope you and your family are in good health and staying safe. I am calling to let you know that all of us at [practice name] are thinking of you and are here to support you during this unprecedented time. We’ve modified our practice’s policies to minimize our patients’ exposure to others and keep your family safe during appointments; your health is our number one priority. Please let us know if you have 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 please contact us if you have any patient care concerns. We hope to see you soon!”

SICK CHILD VISITS

“Hi! This is [name] from [practice name]. 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 are offering telehealth visits for concerns that can be treated virtually and office visits to address concerns that are best managed in person. 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!”



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Connecting With Families

Sample Text Messages

If your practice utilizes text messaging to reach patients, the following messages can be customized and distributed.

SAMPLE 1

Your family's health and safety is our #1 priority! Call our office at XXX-XXX-XXXX to learn about [practice name's] new safety protocols. See you soon!

SAMPLE 2

Visit our website at [practice website] to learn about our new protocols to keep families as safe as possible during this unprecedented pandemic.

SAMPLE 3

Keeping your child vaccinated is key to maintaining their health! To learn about our available vaccination options, contact us at [contact information].

SAMPLE 4

[Practice name] is here for you! Call us today to learn how we're keeping patients safe during office appointments and vaccination visits. XXX-XXX-XXXX

SAMPLE 5

Checkups are important, even during a pandemic! Contact us to schedule your child's well-care appointment today at [contact information].

SAMPLE 6

Don't delay your child's well-care visits! [Practice name] is offering appointments by phone, in person, and through telehealth. Call us today to schedule an appointment. XXX-XXX-XXXX



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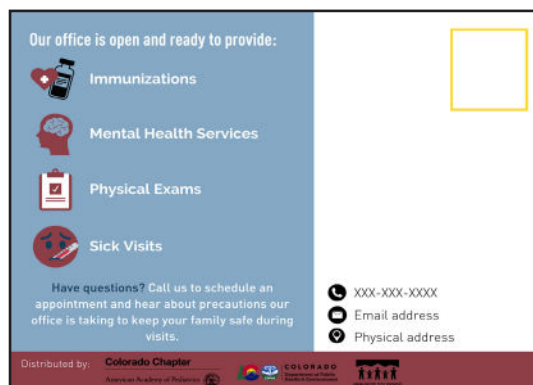


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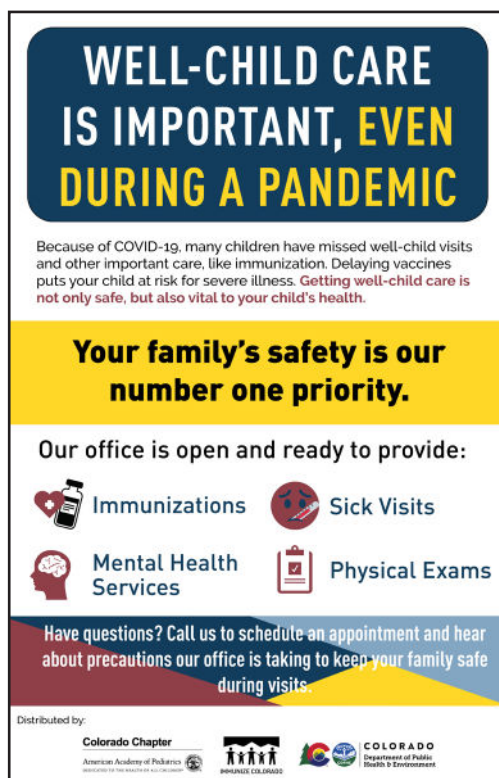
Connecting With Families

Postcard and Office Poster

Customize the postcard below with your office's information to send to patients and families. Simply click either image and update the template with your office's logo, phone number, email address, and office location. Once updated, you can download your postcard and have it printed.



The below poster can be printed and hung in your pediatric office, or shared as an infographic on your website or social media channels. Click the image to download the poster.



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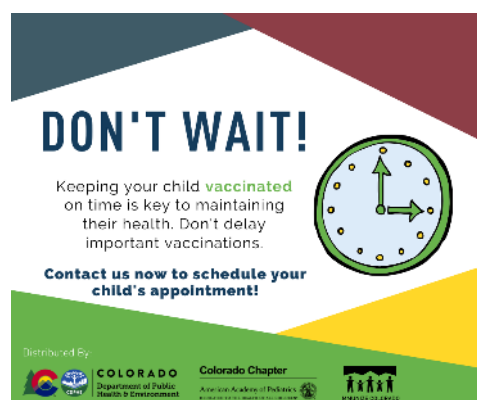
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Connecting on Social Media

Social Media Posts and Graphics

Share these graphics and corresponding messages (see next page) on your social media channels. Click on the images to download.

FACEBOOK GRAPHICS



INSTAGRAM & TWITTER GRAPHICS

View and download these graphics sized for [Instagram and Twitter](#).



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Connecting on Social Media

Social Media Posts and Graphics cont.

Use these draft [social media messages](#) along with the corresponding graphics to encourage families to contact your office for well-child care, vaccinations, and other important health care issues. These messages can be edited to align with the needs of your specific patient population and your practice's policies.

DON'T WAIT!

Facebook: Vaccination rates around the country have fallen sharply due to the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving many children unprotected against disease. While there's not yet a vaccine for coronavirus, there are vaccines to protect your child from 16 infectious diseases! Our office is open and providing well-child care and vaccinations. Don't delay—contact us today to schedule your child's appointment! [insert contact method]

Twitter: While there's not yet a vaccine for coronavirus, there are vaccines to protect your child from 16 infectious diseases! Our office is open and providing well-child care and vaccinations. Don't delay—contact us today to schedule your child's appointment! [insert contact method]

Instagram: Did you know? While there isn't yet a vaccine to protect against coronavirus, there ARE vaccines that protect your child against 16 infectious diseases! Don't delay vaccination. Our office is open for well-child appointments and vaccinations. Contact us today to schedule your child's appointment! [Link in bio]

KEEP UP WITH VACCINATIONS

Facebook: Vaccines are one of the best ways to keep your child healthy and safe. Keeping up with routine vaccinations helps protect your child against harmful and sometimes deadly diseases. Contact our office to learn about available vaccination options, and how we're working hard to keep your family safe during office visits! [insert contact method]

Twitter: Vaccines are one of the best ways to keep your child healthy and safe. Keeping up with routine vaccinations helps protect them against harmful and sometimes deadly diseases. Contact us to learn about available vaccination options! [insert contact method]

Instagram: Just like washing your hands and practicing social distancing helps protect against COVID-19, vaccines protect against many other dangerous illnesses! Keep up with routine vaccinations for your child and help keep them safe and healthy. Contact us to learn about available vaccination options! [Link in bio]

CHILDREN NEED CHECKUPS

Facebook: Well-child care is important, even during a pandemic! Missing well-child visits could put your child at risk. Our office is open and ready to safely provide well-care, sick-care, mental health screenings, immunizations, physicals, and more. Contact us to schedule your child's appointment and learn about precautions we're taking to protect your family during office visits. [insert contact method]



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Connecting on Social Media

Social Media Posts and Graphics cont.

Twitter: Well-child care is important, even during a pandemic! Our office is open and ready to safely provide well-care, sick-care, immunizations, etc. Contact us to schedule your child's appointment and learn what we're doing to protect your family during office visits. [insert contact method]

Instagram: Even during a pandemic, it's important that children receive well-care! Missing well-child visits could put children at risk. Our office is open and ready to safely provide well-care, sick-care, immunizations, etc. Contact us to schedule an appointment and learn about steps we're taking to protect families during office visits. [Link in bio]

OUR FIRST PRIORITY

Facebook: At [practice name], our first priority is your family's health—always. We know families might feel nervous about bringing children in for well-care and other important health issues. Contact us to learn about the many precautions our office is taking to keep your family safe during office visits. [insert contact method]

Twitter: At [practice name], our #1 priority is your family's health—always! We know families might be nervous bringing children in for well-care and other important health issues. Contact us to learn about the precautions our office is taking to keep your family safe during office visits. [insert contact method]

Instagram: At [practice name], our #1 priority is your family's health—always! We know families might be nervous bringing children in for well-care and other important health issues. Contact us to learn about the many precautions our office is taking to keep your family safe during office visits. [Link in bio]

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU

Facebook: At [practice name], we are here for you! We're offering pediatric appointments by phone, through telehealth, and in person. It's important for children to continue receiving well-care and vaccinations. Contact us to schedule your child's appointment and learn about the precautions we're taking to keep your family safe during in-person visits! [insert contact method]

Twitter: At [practice name], we are here for you! We're offering pediatric appointments by phone, through telehealth, and in person. Contact us to schedule your child's well-care appointment and learn about the precautions we're taking to keep your family safe during office visits! [insert contact method]

Instagram: [Practice name] is here for you! We're offering pediatric appointments by phone, through telehealth, and in person. Contact us to schedule your child's well-care appointment and learn about the precautions we're taking to keep your family safe during in-person visits! [Link in bio]



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Connecting With Traditional Media

Template Media Pitch

It's important for the public to be informed about the importance of pediatric care during the pandemic, and the media is a great way to reach the public. The below media pitch can be sent to a reporter or producer at your local TV station or to a newspaper via email. Download an editable version [here](#).

An estimated 70% to 80% of children are NOT seeing their pediatric providers right now.

The problem:

Vaccinations, chronic health problems, everyday illnesses, and regular health checkups have been pushed aside by fears of COVID-19. This is putting children at risk for many other critical—even life-threatening—health issues. [Provider's name] in [city, state] is available for a virtual video or phone interview to address these concerns and what they mean for children in Colorado.

Why is this so concerning?

1. The American Academy of Pediatrics is alarmed with the current pediatric visitation rates and is telling parents to reach out to their local pediatric health care provider NOW to determine the safest way for their child to get well-child and sick-child medical care.
2. [Provider's name] is a practicing [pediatrician, physician assistant, etc.] in [state]. [He/she] wants to reassure parents that pediatric clinics are open and have implemented important policies and protocols to keep children safe during appointments.
3. Pediatric health care providers are concerned about mental health problems in children and teens, including increased suicide attempts.
4. Doctors are seeing flare-ups of asthma, diabetes, and other chronic conditions as families delay health care visits.
5. Pediatric health care providers are concerned about parents' delaying or skipping newborn health checkups, including screenings for jaundice and failure to thrive—conditions in which a few days can mean life or death for an infant.
6. Rates of vaccination, including for highly infectious diseases like measles and pertussis, are dropping. We need to take steps to avoid additional preventable disease outbreaks in communities already threatened by COVID-19.
7. Pediatric health care providers are also concerned about delayed diagnoses and treatments for common childhood illnesses, from ear infections to broken bones.



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Connecting With Traditional Media

Media Pitch cont.

Solutions:

[Provider's name] can share stories from [his/her] own practice about what [he/she] is seeing in children, and can walk your viewers through the options, including:

1. Which health care concerns might be addressed by your provider via a video or telephone visit.
 2. If your child needs to be seen in person, how health care providers are making in-person health care visits as safe as possible. This may include separate "sick" and "well" entrances, seeing patients in the parking lot, or seeing vulnerable newborns before the office opens to other patients.
 3. How to talk with your pediatric health care provider about what visits can safely be delayed, and which are important for your child's current and long-term health.
-

Use the following resources to guide you in an interview:

- [Suggested questions to send to the reporter after you've secured an interview.](#)
- [Talking points for spokespersons.](#)



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Connecting With Traditional Media

Template Letter to the Editor

We welcome you to update and personalize the sample letter below, which is based on a recent statement from AAP, for publication as a letter to the editor in your local newspaper. Check your local paper for their letter to the editor guidelines. Download an editable version [here](#).

On May 8, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published new [data](#) that documents what pediatricians around the nation have been reporting for weeks: many, many children have missed receiving important immunizations to protect them against diseases like measles, meningitis, and whooping cough.

As a pediatric health care provider, this is incredibly worrisome. We do not want to return to a time when parents had to worry that their infant could die of meningitis or measles – especially when we have vaccines to prevent these potentially devastating diseases. With no coronavirus vaccine available, the COVID-19 pandemic is giving all of us real-time insight into what this vulnerability feels like. Fortunately, we have vaccines to protect children and teens against 16 different diseases.

Immunizing infants, children, and adolescents is important and should not be delayed. I'm concerned that children who have missed vaccines have also missed other critical health care that occurs during pediatric visits, including physical exams, developmental and mental health screenings, and other important care.

I've heard first-hand that parents are worried about bringing their child to get well-care. But I want to reassure families that, as providers of pediatric care, our number one priority is our patients' safety. Nationwide, we've innovated ways to make office visits even safer, including setting different hours or locations for well and sick children, implementing rigorous sanitation and cleaning practices, and conducting portions of visits by telehealth. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) urges all parents to contact their child's health care provider to schedule a visit to catch up on vaccines or for a well-child checkup to track growth and development. AAP is continuously providing resources and recommendations to guide pediatricians in managing visits safely and effectively.

As social distancing restrictions begin to lift around the country and people begin to circulate, children and teens who are not vaccinated will be at higher risk for contracting a disease that could be prevented by a vaccine. While we wait for scientists and doctors to develop a vaccine for coronavirus, let's work together to protect our children in every way that we can, today.



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Additional Resources

Other Creative Ways to Reach Patients

- Create a video showing or explaining to patients what it will look like when they come to your office. Explore video platforms like TikTok, Smilebox or simply use your phone. Here are some examples:
 - Lowry Pediatrics [video](#) (TikTok)
 - Pediatric Partners of the Southwest [video](#)
 - Children's Clinic STL [video](#)
 - Western Colorado Pediatric Associates [video](#) (TikTok)
 - Ft. Collins Youth Clinic [video](#)
 - Salud Family Health Centers [video](#)
 - Sapphire Pediatrics [video](#) (Smilebox)
- Conduct a [Facebook Live](#) to show how your office is keeping patients safe during office visits. Here's an [example](#) from HealthyChildren.org.
- Host a [Twitter chat](#) and encourage patients to ask questions about your practice's response to COVID-19, as well as other general health questions.
- Provide fun, educational activity ideas for kids with your patients' families, like [these](#).
- Implement a pop-up on your website encouraging patients to schedule routine care appointments. Here's an [example](#) from Pediatrics 5280.
- Stay connected with your patients via weekly email updates, like this [example](#) from Lowry Pediatrics.

Additional Resources for Pediatric Providers

- [CDPHE's Information on the Outbreak of COVID-19](#)
- [Immunize Colorado's COVID-19 Resource Hub](#)
- [AAP's Critical Updates on COVID-19](#)
- [AAP's Guidance on Providing Pediatric Well-Care During COVID-19](#)
- [AAP's Guidance on the Necessary Use of Telehealth During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [COVID-19 and Pediatric Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome](#)
- [AAP Statement on New Data Showing Declines in Childhood Immunizations](#)
- [Translated COVID-19 Materials / Resources](#)
- [Letter urging Congress to protect and strengthen Medicaid and CHIP](#)
- [Letter to HHS calling for urgent action to address recent downward trends in vaccination](#)
- [Share your COVID-19 story with AAP](#)



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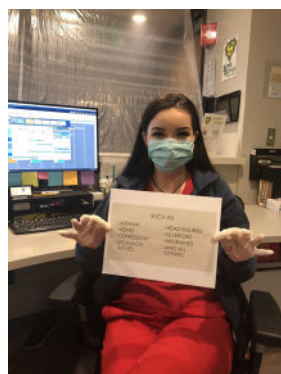
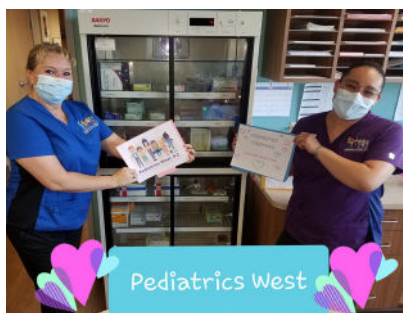
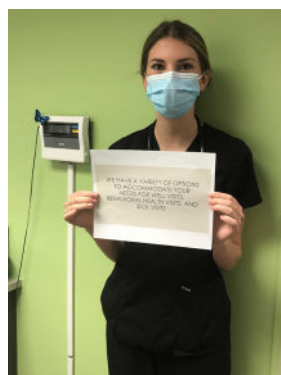
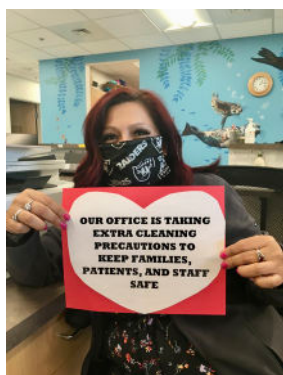
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Thank you, Colorado pediatric providers!



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Acknowledgments

The American Academy of Pediatrics - Colorado Chapter, Immunize Colorado, and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for sharing their materials and expertise in the development of this toolkit.

Children's Clinic STL (St. Louis, MO)
Lowry Pediatrics
Pediatrics 5280
Pediatric Partners of the Southwest
Salud Family Health Centers
Sapphire Pediatrics
The Youth Clinic - Ft. Collins
Western Colorado Pediatric Associates

Finally, our organizations would like to thank Emily Clancy, Communications Director at Immunize Colorado, and Leisha Andersen, MD, MPH, FAAP, AAP Colorado member, for their "above and beyond" efforts in putting this resource together for us and for Colorado's pediatric providers.

**For questions, please contact
info@aapcolorado.org.**



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