Using EHRs for Vaccine Reminders

The Community Preventive Services Task Force, an independent, nonfederal panel of public health and prevention experts, recommends reminder and recall interventions to increase vaccination rates in children, adolescents, and adults. Reminder and recall interventions are used to remind patients that vaccinations are due (reminders) or late (recall). Reminders and recalls may be delivered by various methods including telephone, letter, postcard, text message, immunization information systems (IIS), and EHRs/EMRs. Most reminder and recall notices are tailored for individual patients, and many include educational messages about the importance of vaccination. Using reminder recall programs is also a way to achieve a core Meaningful Use objective.

The graphic below provides some tips to help you effectively utilize reminder recall programs in your clinical workflow. Start by educating your staff about what patient reminders involve. Please visit the Let's Vaccinate website (LetsVaccinate.org) for examples of reminder postcards that you can customize for your patients.

Set up an EHR system to assist you in managing patient populations and their preventive care needs.

Work with your EHR vendor to enable the system to identify patients who are not up-to-date on recommended immunizations.

Use filters within your EHR system to flag appropriate patients by age, immunization needs, or other clinically relevant information.

Decide on appropriate reminders to incorporate in your clinical workflow.

Send postcards, secure e-mail or text messages, or phone call reminders to patients, based on their personal preference.

If the patient declines to choose his or her own preferred method, select your choice of communication medium.

Send reminders to active patients who have frequented the office.
