

AGS | OLDER ADULTS VACCINE INITIATIVE

2024 Vaccine Ambassador Guide

The AGS Older Adults Vaccine Initiative is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award to the Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS), with 100 percent funded by CDC/HHS. In this initiative, AGS leverages existing resources and ongoing investments in content and technology. Click [here](#) for the press release.

Our overarching goal is to increase immunization rates in older adults who are eligible for routine vaccination (across all vaccines) in the United States. AGS plans an expanded initial focus on four vaccines given their importance to the health of older adults (COVID-19, Flu, Zoster, Pneumonia).

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*Please note: On June 27, 2024, the CDC Director adopted the ACIP’s recommendations for use of 2024–2025 COVID-19 vaccines in people ages 6 months and older as approved or authorized by FDA. The 2024–2025 vaccines are expected to be available in fall 2024. This guide will be updated at that time to align with the new recommendations.

Learn more: www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2024/s-t0627-vaccine-recommendations.html

Role of the Vaccine Ambassador

What is a Vaccine Ambassador?

An AGS Vaccine Ambassador is a health care professional who works to improve vaccination rates among older adults in their community through:

- Promoting the importance of vaccination to our health and quality of life as we age
- Following the National Vaccine Advisory Committee's (NVAC) Standards of Adult Immunization Practices (SAIP) in their own practice
- Educating colleagues about the standards and about AGS Resources available to support vaccination
- Encourage systems change around older adult vaccination

Benefits of Becoming a Vaccine Ambassador

- Ongoing education to keep you up to date on recommended vaccines
- Obtaining a digital AGS Vaccine Ambassador badge
- Receiving a letter from the AGS for inclusion in your promotions package
- Access to the exclusive online community for Health System Partners and Ambassadors
- Networking with other health care professionals working towards the same goal
- Participating in Team Webinars, which are one-hour educational sessions focusing on different aspects of the vaccine initiative. All webinars are recorded and are available to those who were not able to attend the live event.

Talking Points

These key messages can be used when speaking to partners, the community, or leadership about vaccinations and the importance of staying up to date with vaccines.

General

- Safety has been key in developing and approving new vaccines.
- New vaccines, such as the COVID-19 immunizations, are assessed by a long-standing, rigorous, and transparent process through the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), where data is reviewed and evaluated before authorization.
- Getting vaccines to protect you from illness is one of the most important things you can do to stay healthy. Vaccines can have side effects, but for most people, it is more dangerous to risk getting sick.

COVID-19

- The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on older adults, especially those living in nursing homes.

- COVID-19 is a disease caused by a virus. Many people who have COVID-19 can have mild symptoms, however, others can have severe illness or die.
- The best protection against COVID-19 is to take the recommended vaccines to ensure you are up to date.
- Being up to date with your COVID-19 vaccination will lower your risk of getting sick if you are exposed to the coronavirus. If you do get sick, vaccination substantially lowers the risk of becoming seriously ill.

Influenza (Flu)

- Influenza results in approximately 40,000 deaths annually in the US, nearly all of which are older adults.
- Flu season refers to the time of year, typically every fall and winter, when different types of influenza viruses spread in more numbers within our communities. It is best to get your shot in the fall before flu season begins.
- If you are 65 or older, a resident of a nursing home, or have a serious health condition, you are at high risk for having serious flu-related problems, so it is especially important to get vaccinated against the flu.
- In recent flu seasons, about 70% to 90% of flu-related deaths occurred among older adults.
- Getting the flu shot every year protects you. If you get the flu shot, you are less likely to get the flu or if you do get the flu, you are less likely to get seriously sick from it.

Pneumococcal

- Everybody age 65 or older should get a pneumococcal vaccine – especially if you are at high risk, such as nursing home residents and those with chronic health problems (e.g. diabetes, heart problems, cancer etc.).
- Almost 1 million people aged 65 or older are hospitalized with pneumonia each year.
- Around 30% of older adults treated for pneumonia will die.
- Pneumococcal vaccines can prevent you from getting illnesses caused by pneumococcal bacteria. Pneumococcal bacteria can cause pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, and meningitis.
- Pneumonia can quickly become life threatening – especially to those with other health conditions or a weakened immune system.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

- RSV causes upper and lower respiratory disease similar to influenza in older adults.
- Older adults account for most of the adult RSV disease burden, with an estimated 60,000–160,000 hospitalizations and 6,000-10,000 deaths in adults aged ≥65 years annually.

- There are 3 RSV vaccines: Pfizer RSV vaccine (RSVpreF), GSK adjuvanted RSV vaccine (RSVPreF3), and Moderna mRNA RSV vaccine.
- The CDC recommends that all adults 75 years and older should receive a single dose of RSV vaccination. In addition, adults 60-74 years old who are at increased risk for severe RSV disease, should receive a single dose of RSV vaccine. Healthcare professionals should consider the risk factors for getting seriously sick from RSV when helping an older adult decide whether to get the vaccine.
 - Benefits: In adults 60 years and above all RSV vaccines significantly reduce the risk of RSV lower respiratory tract disease.
 - Harms: There were serious neurological inflammatory events in three of 20,255 adults within 42 days after receipt of Pfizer RSVpreF and in three of 17,922 adults within 42 days after receipt of GSK RSVPreF3.
 - RSV vaccination is recommended as a single lifetime dose only.
 - Persons who have already received RSV vaccination are NOT recommended to receive another dose.
- Medicare Part D is currently covering the cost of RSV vaccination with zero out-of-pocket expense to the patient, but some private insurers do not cover the vaccine.

Zoster (Shingles)

- Most people who get shingles are older adults.
- About a third of people aged 60 and older who get shingles have nerve pain. The older a person is, the longer that pain may last.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that people aged 50 and older get two doses of the recombinant zoster vaccine (Shingrix) to prevent shingles and its complications.
- The shingles vaccine is the only way to protect against shingles and postherpetic neuralgia (PHN), the most common complication of shingles. (PHN can cause long-term nerve pain, even after you no longer have shingles.)
- If you have had shingles in the past, Shingrix can help prevent you from getting it again.

AGS Resources for Vaccine Ambassadors

The AGS has developed a suite of resources available for Vaccine Ambassadors to use. Use these yourself and promote them to your colleagues as well. They all can be found at vaccines.agscocare.org.

Educational Tools

The Online Educational Curriculum on Vaccines in Older Adults

The [Online Curriculum](#) offers a self-directed educational curriculum for health professionals with 5 modules, each including a slide set, notes, and references. The curriculum includes basic information on essential vaccination for older adults, as well as setting-specific information, coding, and vaccine hesitancy. Free Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits are available upon successful completion of the curriculum.

Institutions might choose to develop an educational program to facilitate the introduction of the modules to their healthcare teams.

An education program can be useful for all members of the healthcare team such as nurses, case managers, or pharmacists. Such an intervention could include lunch and learns or grand rounds.

2023 Update on Vaccination Strategies for Older Adults: Matching the Approach to the Individual and Care Setting

The [Update on Vaccination Strategies](#) symposium at the 2023 AGS Annual Meeting was recorded and published and is openly available to everyone.

Essential Vaccines Mobile App

The AGS Guideline to Common Immunization in Older Adults is available through the *iGeriatrics* Mobile App. This tool supports geriatrics health professionals seeking to enhance immunization in their practice in accordance with the Standards for Adult Immunization Practices (SAIP) and is aligned with the most up to date CDC guidelines. It includes guidance on the COVID-19, Flu, Zoster, Pneumonia, and RSV vaccines given their importance to the health of older adults. *iGeriatrics* combines several of American Geriatrics Society's clinical information offerings into one easy to use free application.

Tell your colleagues about the App – it is available for free via the [Apple Store](#) and the [Google Play Store](#). Link to it from your organization's website – or promote it on social media.

Geriatrics Evaluation and Management Tool (GEMS)

The AGS Geriatrics Evaluation & Management Tool (GEMS) provides quick guidance to clinicians

and trainees who are caring for older adults. The [AGS GEMS Tools](#) can be used as a quick consult or checklist for clinicians who are caring for older adults or as a training tool.

The Immunization GEMS tool is available free to all. It can be accessed digitally or through the AGS GEMS App. A [downloadable pdf](#) is also available.

Patient Education Resources

The AGS has created several [resources](#) for healthcare professionals to use to educate and engage with their patients. This collection includes patient handouts and videos that clinicians can provide to their patients offering information on essential vaccinations for older adults.

Ambassadors can access all pdfs for the patient handouts through the [AGS Vaccine website](#).

Ambassadors are encouraged to download and print the patient handouts as needed.

A section of the [HealthinAging.org](#) website is focused on vaccinations, and provides access to all of our patient education resources to older adults and their families. You are also encouraged to refer your patients to the [HealthinAging.org](#) page, and link to it from your own websites or promotional materials.

AGS Older Adults Vaccine Initiative Podcast

The [AGS Older Adults Vaccine Initiative Podcast](#), using a Q & A format, features the editors from the AGS Online Educational Curriculum on Vaccines discussing key takeaway points on essential vaccinations in Older Adults with curriculum authors – all national experts in various vaccination-related topics.

Communication Guide & Templates

The following story templates can be customized and used to promote vaccinations in older adults, as well as provide awareness for the **AGS Older Adults Vaccine Initiative tools & resources**. Ambassadors are encouraged to share information with the communications teams at their institution, Department/Division/Center team member, and to disseminate this information via their own communications channels (e.g., social media, websites, online profile, etc.).

Newsletter & ListServ Stories

Audience: Healthcare Professionals

AGS Older Adults Vaccine Initiative Resources Available for Health Professionals

Updated professional and public education resources on vaccines for older adults are available on the AGS Older Adults Vaccine Initiative [website](#). All resources are free to access, including patient education handouts, a self-directed online educational curriculum (with CME available) and accompanying podcast, a Geriatrics Evaluation & Management Tool (GEMS) on vaccinations and the Essential Vaccines Mobile App. Visit vaccines.agscocare.org today!

Complete the AGS Online Vaccine Curriculum and Earn CME

The AGS Older Adults Vaccine Initiative's [Online Curriculum](#) offers a self-directed educational curriculum with 5 modules, each including a slide set that a learner can go through at their own pace, notes and references. The curriculum includes basic information on essential vaccination for older adults, coding guidance, and information on vaccine hesitancy. Visit the online curriculum at vaccines.agscocare.org and earn continuing medical education (CME) credits upon completion.

iGeriatrics Mobile App Available for Free

Access the AGS Quick Guide to Essential Immunizations for Older Adults for free, through the iGeriatrics Mobile App. This tool supports geriatrics health professionals seeking to enhance immunization in their practice in accordance with the Standards for Adult Immunization Practices (SAIP). It includes guidance on the COVID-19 Flu, Zoster, and Pneumonia vaccines given their importance to the health of older adults. Available for free via the [Apple Store](#) and the [Google Play Store](#), the Quick Guide includes essential information about must-have vaccines for older adults.

Download it today!

Spotlight on the AGS Older Adults Vaccine Initiative Podcast Series

The [AGS Older Adults Vaccine Initiative Podcast](#) features discussions related to basic information on essential vaccination for older adults, as well as setting-specific information, coding, and vaccine hesitancy. The podcast follows a question/answer format featuring national experts discussing key takeaway points on vaccinations in older adults.

Listen to the podcasts for free. Episodes include:

- Older Adult Vaccinations (COVID-19, flu, pneumonia, shingles, etc.) with Dr. Sharon Brangman (SUNY Upstate Medical University) and Dr. Ken Schmader (Duke University Medical Center and Durham VA Health Care System)
- Quality Improvement and Vaccination (including EHR, Immunization Information System [IIS]), with Dr. Tim Farrell (University of Utah and the VA SLC GRECC) and Dr. Nuzha Amjad (UTHealth Houston, McGovern Medical School)
- Vaccination Coding with Dr. Sharon Brangman (SUNY Upstate Medical University) and Dr. Robert Zorowitz (Humana)

- Vaccine Hesitancy with Dr. Sharon Brangman (SUNY Upstate Medical University) and Dr. Jorie Butler (University of Utah)
- Settings of Care with Dr. Tim Farrell (University of Utah and the VA SLC GRECC) and Dr. Mariah Robertson (Johns Hopkins School of Medicine)

Access them [here](#).

Audience: Older Adults & their Caregivers

Recommended Vaccines for Older Adults

Getting vaccinated is one of the most important actions you can do to stay healthy. Vaccines are often injections, sometimes called “shots” and are very safe.

You can contact your healthcare provider to help you set up an appointment to get your vaccines. You may also be able to get vaccines at your local neighborhood pharmacy. The Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) recommends the following vaccines for most older adults:

- Influenza (Flu) Vaccine
- COVID-19 Vaccine
- Pneumococcal (Pneumonia) Vaccine
- Shingles (Herpes Zoster) Vaccine
- Tetanus/Diphtheria Vaccine

Vaccines can have side effects, but for most people, it is more dangerous to risk getting sick. If you have concerns about vaccine side effects or safety, speak to your healthcare provider. Learn more about essential vaccines for older adults at [HealthinAging.org](https://www.healthinaging.org).

Keep Yourself Protected from COVID-19 with Updated Vaccines

Many people who have COVID-19 can have mild symptoms. Other people can have severe illness or die. Older adults or people with certain diseases, such as diabetes, have more risks related to COVID-19 than others.

The best protection against this virus is to stay up to date with the COVID-19 vaccine. The updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccines protect against the current circulating variants of the COVID-19 virus.

Get the basics about the COVID-19 vaccines [here](#).

Stay Healthy this Flu Season

Flu viruses can spread quickly through our communities, and they change all the time. That's why flu shots are updated every year to protect you against the flu viruses that are likely to be most common. Getting a flu shot has many benefits and is especially important for those who are at high risk for having flu related complications, such as people aged 65 or older, nursing home residents, and people with serious health conditions. Learn more about the flu vaccine [here](#).

Social Media Posts

Facebook

Audience: Health Care Professionals/Colleagues

- Become a #VaccineAmbassador with @The American Geriatrics Society today! AGS Vaccine Ambassadors have access to an exclusive online community to network with other health care professionals working towards the same goal of increasing immunization rates for vaccine-preventable diseases in older adults. Learn more about becoming a #VaccineAmbassador here: [AGS Older Adults Vaccine Initiative \(agscocare.org\)](https://www.agscocare.org/AGS-Older-Adults-Vaccine-Initiative)
- @The American Geriatrics Society's #VaccineAmbassadors are a dedicated group of health care professionals working to improve vaccination rates among older adults in their community. Join the AGS team and help increase immunization rates for vaccine-preventable diseases in older adults by [signing up](#) to be a Vaccine Ambassador. Get more information at [vaccines.agscocare.org](https://www.vaccines.agscocare.org).
- Visit the AGS Older Adults Vaccine Initiative website to access their portfolio of free resources designed to help clinicians increase immunization rates in older adults. Find patient education resources, podcast episodes, the free *iGeriatrics* mobile app, and so much more [available here](#).

Audience: Older Adults and their Caregivers

Post 1

Did you know that getting vaccinated is one of the best ways to protect yourself from illness? Vaccines are safe, and the benefits outweigh the potential side effects. If you have any concerns about vaccines, talk to your healthcare provider. They're there to help!

For more information about essential vaccines for older adults visit [Healthingaging.org](https://www.healthingaging.org).

#StayHealthy #VaccinesWork #ProtectYourself #VaccineAmbassador

Post 2

At any age, staying healthy is a top priority, and vaccines play a crucial role in health – especially for older adults. Vaccines are not only safe but also highly effective in preventing illness. Getting vaccinated is easy! Contact your healthcare provider, reach out to your local health department, or visit your neighborhood pharmacy to learn more about available vaccines.

#StayHealthy #VaccinesWork #ProtectYourself #VaccineAmbassador

Post 3

The CDC recommends the following vaccines for most older adults:

- COVID-19 Vaccine
- Influenza (Flu) Vaccine
- Pneumococcal (Pneumonia) Vaccine
- Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Vaccine (CDC recommends all adults 75 years and older should receive a single dose of RSV vaccine. Adults 60-74 years old who are at increased risk for severe RSV disease, should also receive a single dose of RSV vaccine.)
- Shingles (Herpes Zoster) Vaccine
- Tetanus/Diphtheria Vaccine

Check out [this resource](#) from the @American Geriatrics Society to learn more about these vaccines and others recommended for older adults.

#VaccineAmbassador

Post 4

COVID-19 is a highly infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. While some cases are mild, others can be severe, especially for older adults and those with chronic health conditions. Shockingly, one in 100 older Americans has lost their lives to this disease.

If you're 65 or older, here's important news for you: It's time to check-in on the latest recommendations based on your health needs for the 2023-2024 updated COVID-19 vaccine if you haven't already, available from Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, or Novavax.

Get the basics about the COVID-19 vaccine [here](#).

#COVID19Vaccine #ProtectYourself #StaySafe #VaccineAmbassador

Post 5

Pneumonia is a serious lung infection caused by pneumococcal bacteria, and it can be especially dangerous for older adults. Did you know that nearly 1 million people aged 65 or older are hospitalized with pneumonia every year?

You can protect yourself against pneumonia and its health risks with pneumococcal vaccines. Learn more about the pneumococcal vaccines with [this handout](#) from the @American Geriatrics Society.

Contact your healthcare provider, reach out to your local health department, or visit your neighborhood pharmacy to learn more about available vaccines.

#VaccineAmbassador

Post 6

Everyone aged 65 and older should get the pneumococcal vaccine, especially if you're at high risk, which includes people living in nursing homes or individuals with heart disease, diabetes, asthma, lung disease, HIV, or other chronic health issues.

Learn more about the two different types of pneumococcal vaccines [here](#).

Don't wait; protect your health and reduce the risk of pneumonia. Get vaccinated today!

#PneumoniaPrevention #StayHealthy #VaccinesWork #VaccineAmbassador

Post 7

Shingles can be a serious and painful condition, especially for older adults. But there's a way to defend yourself and your health – with the shingles vaccine.

For more information check out [this handout](#) from the @American Geriatrics Society.

#ShinglesVaccine #StayHealthy #VaccinesWork #VaccineAmbassador

Post 8

Shingles, a viral disease that affects nerves and skin, can bring about a blistering rash and excruciating pain. What's interesting is that it stems from the same virus that causes chickenpox, known as the varicella zoster virus.

There's no cure for shingles, but the good news is it can be prevented and treated.

Don't let shingles catch you off guard. Learn more [here](#) and consider the shingles vaccine. It's your best defense against this painful condition!

#ShinglesAwareness #StayHealthy #VaccinesWork #VaccineAmbassador

Post 9

Scientists are still unraveling why some people who've had chickenpox never develop shingles while others do. But, did you know, about 30% of people in the US will get shingles at some point in their lives? Your risk increases with age, and so does the likelihood of complications, including nerve pain.

Learn more about shingles and the shingles vaccine [here](#).

#VaccineAmbassador

Post 10

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a highly contagious virus that can lead to lung and breathing passage infections.

The CDC recommends that all adults 75 years and older should receive a single dose of RSV vaccine. In addition, adults 60-74 years old who are at increased risk for severe RSV disease, should receive a single dose of RSV vaccine.

Learn more [here](#).

#VaccineAmbassador

Twitter

Audience: Health Care Professionals

- Become an @AmerGeriatrics #VaccineAmbassador and help to promote the importance of vaccination to our health and quality of life as we age! Learn more: vaccines.agscocare.org/vaccine_ambassadors
- An @AmerGeriatrics Vaccine Ambassador is a health care professional who works to improve vaccination rates among older adults in their community. Learn how to become a #VaccineAmbassador [here](#).

- @AmerGeriatrics Vaccine Ambassadors have access to the exclusive online community for Health System Partners and Ambassadors and network with other health care professionals working towards same goal. Learn more about the perks of becoming a #VaccineAmbassador [here](#).
- Access all of @AmerGeriatrics most up to date professional and public education resources on vaccines for older adults on the AGS Older Adults Vaccine Initiative [website – for free!](#) The comprehensive suite of materials on vaccinations for geriatrics health professionals was recently revised in accordance with new COVID guidance from the CDC as of April 2024.

Audience: Older Adults and their Caregivers

Post 1

Protect yourself with vaccines! Vaccines are safe, as benefits far outweigh the risks. If you have vaccine concerns, consult your healthcare provider. They're there to help! Find vaccines at your local healthcare provider, health department, or pharmacy.

#VaccineAmbassador

Post 2

The CDC recommends the flu vaccine for older adults – especially for those 65+, nursing home residents, and those with certain health conditions. Caregivers, protect your loved ones too!

Learn more [here](#).

Don't forget to get your flu shot in the fall. #VaccineAmbassador

Post 3

Staying healthy at any age is a priority, and vaccines are key! They're safe and highly effective. Contact your healthcare provider, local health department, or neighborhood pharmacy to learn more about available vaccines.

#VaccineAmbassador

Post 4

COVID-19, caused by SARS-CoV-2, is highly infectious. Some cases are mild, but older adults and those with chronic conditions face severe risks. Shockingly, 1 in 100 older Americans have lost their lives to this disease. Learn more about COVID-19 [here](#).

#Vaccine Ambassador

Post 5

If you're 65 or older, here's important news for you: It's time to check-in on the latest recommendations based on your health needs for the 2023-2024 updated COVID-19 vaccine, available from Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, or Novavax.

Get the basics about the COVID-19 vaccine [here](#).

#COVID19Vaccine #VaccineAmbassador

Post 6

Shingles can be a serious & painful condition, especially for adults 50 and older. But, there's a way to defend yourself – with the shingles vaccine.

For more information, check out this [handout here](#) from @AmerGeriatrics.

Post 7

Did you know that about 30% of people in the US will get shingles at some point in their lives? Your risk increases with age, and so does the likelihood of complications, including nerve pain. Learn more about shingles [here](#).

Post 8

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a highly contagious virus that can lead to lung and breathing passage infections.

The CDC recommends that all adults 75 years and older should receive a single dose of RSV vaccine. In addition, adults 60-74 years old who are at increased risk for severe RSV disease, should receive a single dose of RSV vaccine.

Learn more [here](#).

Multi-Media Assets

Graphics



AGS | OLDER ADULTS VACCINE INITIATIVE

Reduce vaccine-preventable diseases in older adults

Become an AGS Vaccine Ambassador



AGS | OLDER ADULTS VACCINE INITIATIVE

Reduce vaccine-preventable diseases in older adults


Become an AGS Vaccine Ambassador



AGS | OLDER ADULTS VACCINE INITIATIVE

Reduce your risk for vaccine-preventable diseases

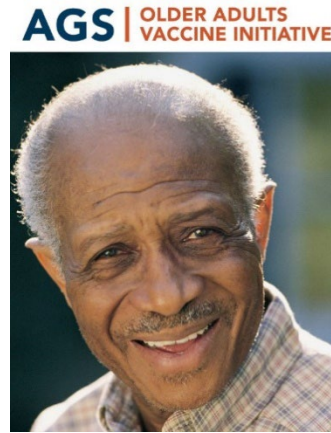
Get Vaccinated



AGS | OLDER ADULTS VACCINE INITIATIVE

Reduce your risk for vaccine-preventable diseases

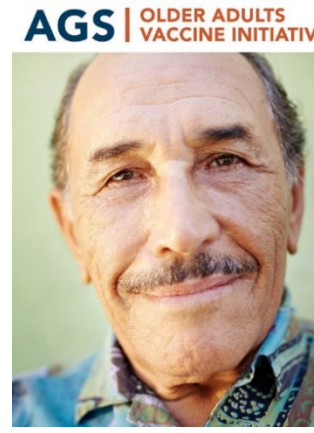
Get Vaccinated



AGS | OLDER ADULTS VACCINE INITIATIVE

Reduce your risk for vaccine-preventable diseases

Get Vaccinated



AGS | OLDER ADULTS VACCINE INITIATIVE

Reduce your risk for vaccine-preventable diseases

Get Vaccinated

Reporting

Vaccine Ambassadors are encouraged to report their outreach efforts, so that we can track dissemination and spread of the program.

Ambassadors who successfully report activity throughout the year will earn a Vaccine Ambassador badge and earn the Vaccine Ambassador title that they can include on their academic CVs, along with the listing of presentations that they have led.

Complete the reporting form [here](#).