

WHY TEXAS NEEDS AN OPT-OUT IMMUNIZATION REGISTRY



What is an immunization registry?

Immunization registries are population-based, publicly run databases that store the vaccination records of participating residents. Texas' immunization registry, run by the Texas Department of State Health Services, is called ImmTrac2.

Why are registries useful?

Immunization registries keep track of patients' vaccine data. They provide doctors with access to patients' immunization records so they can make appropriate recommendations and ensure that patients do not receive duplicate vaccines. Registries also help identify under-vaccinated populations that are at risk of disease spread and help public health officials determine how to effectively allocate health resources.

What is an "opt-out" registry versus an "opt-in" one?

"Opt-out" refers to the consent system used to include patient information in a registry. An opt-out registry captures patient information unless the patient formally requests to not participate. An "opt-in" registry requires a patient to formally request to be included. Texas' registry, ImmTrac2, is one of only two opt-in state vaccine registries in the U.S.¹

Why should Texas have an opt-out registry?

An opt-out system is easier and cheaper. Because most Texans (roughly 55%) have opted in to ImmTrac2, an opt-out system would reduce the registry's cost by close to 90% and eliminate excess paperwork, allowing health care providers to spend more time with patients.^{1,2} It would also save money by reducing redundant vaccinations and ensure that patients are up to date on their vaccines, thus decreasing disease spread. It would still give those who do not want to participate the option to withdraw.

What information is stored in ImmTrac2?

ImmTrac2 stores each patient's vaccine records, name, date of birth, gender, ethnicity, contact information and address.³ This is the same information provided for driver's licenses, birth certificates and voter registration databases.

Who can access the data stored in ImmTrac2?

ImmTrac2's data is not publicly accessible. It can only be accessed by authorized personnel from the Texas Department of State Health Services, health care providers, schools and child care facilities.³

Could a person's vaccination status be inferred if they do not opt in to ImmTrac2?

No. People could request to be excluded or not get vaccinated, and therefore not be included in the registry.

¹ Julie A. Boom et al., *Journal of Public Health Management & Practice* 16, no. 5 (2010): 18–25 <http://bit.ly/3kCvYpA>.

² Emma Freer, *Texas Medicine*, 2022, <http://bit.ly/3ZzaBUR>.

³ Texas Department of State Health Services, <http://bit.ly/3ZdTyrv>.

For more information on vaccines, visit the Vaccines Cause Adults page at: bakerinstitute.org/vaccines-cause-adults.

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