



Association of  
Immunization  
Managers

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**46 Immunization Advocates Receive National Recognition for Contributions to Vaccine Access-  
Association of Immunization Managers (AIM) Recognizes New Winners of the 2025  
Immunization Champion Award**

[ROCKVILLE, MD] – August 7, 2025 –Forty-six immunization advocates across the country have been named *Immunization Champions* for their outstanding efforts to promote immunization in their state, city, or territory. These awards acknowledge the outstanding efforts of individuals who go above and beyond, ensuring access to vaccines in their communities and increasing their community's immunization coverage rates.

The 2025 Immunization Champion Award winners ([read their full profiles here](#)), organized alphabetically by jurisdiction, include:

- Alaska - Dan Nelson, PharmD
- American Samoa - Tuumafua Maiava
- Arizona - Adelina Lopez, LPN
- Arkansas - Robert Hopkins Jr., MD, MACP
- California - Deborah Higer, MD
- Chicago - Laura Erving-Bailey, AAS, BA
- Colorado - Melissa Bonomo, PharmD
- Connecticut - Claire Free, MD
- District of Columbia - Habib Shariat, MD
- Georgia - Shirley Borghi
- Hawai'i - Hannah Litt, MS, APRN, CNM
- Illinois - Diane Zanolco
- Indiana - Megan Carlson, DrPH, MSN, RN, PPCNP-BC
- Iowa - Theresa Endres, BSN
- Kansas - Gretchen Homan, MD, FAAP
- Kentucky - Horace Hambrick, MD
- Louisiana - Jennifer Avegno, BA, MA, MD
- Maine - Anne Conners, MA, MPH
- Marshall Islands - Melaia Lawanivalu, RN, MPH, BSN
- Maryland- Michael Zollicoffer, MD
- Massachusetts - Sherry Maiorana, MA
- Michigan - Katherine Schafer, DO, FAAP
- Minnesota - Sheyanga Beecher, MSN, MPH, CNP
- Missouri - Kara Bushman, MA
- Montana - Sophia Newcomer, PhD, MPH
- Nevada - Jose Cucalon Calderon, MD
- New Hampshire - John Beland
- New Mexico - Kateri Chino, MSW
- New York - Megan Whitney, PharmD, RPH
- New York City - Gilberto Ward, RN
- North Carolina - Kelly Kimple, MD, MPH
- North Dakota - Sarah O'Connell, RN, BSN
- Northern Mariana Islands - Philip Dauterman, MD
- Ohio - Abby Heist
- Oklahoma - Rachel Burgess, APRN, FNP-C
- Oregon - Tracie Koeplin, BSN
- Pennsylvania - Ann Perkins, RN, BSN, CSN
- Philadelphia - Merrill Mittathany, PharmD
- Puerto Rico - Mirialyz De Jesus Gonzalez, RN
- Rhode Island - Rosa Tomlinson, RN
- South Carolina - Kathleen Cartmell, PHD, MPH
- Tennessee - Cristy Layman, RN
- U.S. Virgin Islands - Miriam Judy Turnbull, BSN
- Virginia - Danielle Francisco, LPN
- Washington - Wil Edwards, PharmD
- Wisconsin - Penny Funk, RN, MSN

*Immunization Champion* award recipients are selected by their jurisdiction's immunization program from a pool of health professionals, coalition members, community advocates, and other

immunization leaders. Immunization programs across the U.S. and affiliated territories coordinated the nomination process and submitted their chosen awardee to AIM for final review. One winner is selected in participating states, cities, and territories.

“AIM is thrilled to recognize our annual Immunization Champion Award winners, honoring community members who keep us safe from vaccine-preventable diseases. AIM and its members highlight the hard work and celebrate the immunization leadership of these 46 winners,” said AIM Executive Director Claire Hannan.

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#### **About Association of Immunization Managers:**

The Association of Immunization Managers (AIM) is a nonprofit membership association comprised of the directors of the 66 federally funded state, territorial, and local public health immunization programs. AIM is dedicated to working with its partners nationwide to reduce, eliminate, or eradicate vaccine-preventable diseases. AIM also works to ensure the success of its members by providing support in their programming interests. Since 1999, AIM has enabled collaboration among immunization managers to effectively control vaccine-preventable diseases and improve immunization coverage in the United States. For more information on AIM, please visit [www.immunizationmanagers.org/](http://www.immunizationmanagers.org/).