

*On March 21, 2017, the American Lung Association submitted the following comments in response to NCQA's invitation to comment on HEDIS® 2018 Public Comment – Specific Comments on Pneumococcal Vaccination Status for Older Adults (PVS).*

The American Lung Association supports adding Pneumococcal Vaccine Status for Older Americans as a new HEDIS in 2018. Pneumococcal pneumonia is a serious, life-threatening lung infection and a leading cause of death in the United States. Older people have a higher risk of getting the disease, and are more likely to die from it.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices updated 2014 guidelines recommend that adults age 65 and older receive a series to two pneumococcal vaccines. Despite this recommendation, data show that a substantial percentage of this age group remains unprotected.

Over a quarter of a million people over 50 are hospitalized annually in the United States with pneumococcal pneumonia. However, despite the impact the disease has on older Americans, there is a lack of awareness among older Americans that are at risk. Only 50 percent of this cohort think they are personally at risk for the disease.

Adding a pneumococcal vaccine status for older Americans to the HEDIS measures, should help increase awareness for the vaccine. Vaccination are especially important for patients that have a pre-existing lung disease, such as asthma or COPD. And the infection can be can be very dangerous for patients with compromised lungs. Increasing the awareness and the uptake of the vaccine will save lives and money.

The American Lung Association supports the inclusion of pneumococcal vaccine status for older Americans for HEDIS 2018.

