

Protecting the Longevity Boom: Adult Immunization in **South Korea**

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Add a vaccination reminder to the screening invitation.

The National Health Insurance Service's successful screening invitation already reaches every insured adult from age 20, so one added line would capture people to expand coverage.¹

2 Extend the joint influenza report to every adult vaccine.

KDCA and the National Health Insurance Service designed their first joint influenza report, so next season's edition could include full adult uptake rates and severe outcomes by age.²

3 Fund shingles vaccination for adults aged 70 and over.

The KDCA's 2023 assessment ranked the vaccine for adults 70 and over high on the list,³ so the Ministry of Health and Welfare now needs the economic evidence to fund it.

IMPACT OF THESE CHANGES

19x1

Adult Vax Return
on Investmentⁱ

30-60%

Reduced Risk of
Heart Attackⁱⁱ

3-6

Lost Work Days
Prevented by
Adult Vaxⁱⁱⁱ

WHY IT MATTERS

Vaccinating older adults reduces hospital admissions, keeps older adults and their caregivers healthy and independent, and helps manage non-communicable diseases that are common later in life.

CURRENT POLICY LANDSCAPE

South Korea’s adult immunization runs on shared central and local financing and local vaccine support programs.^{4,5} Influenza vaccines are free from age 65, with influenza reaching 81.6% coverage in 2024 to 2025. The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency’s 2023 priority assessment ranked shingles a priority for adults 70 and over with 167 of 229 local governments funding it, creating geographic disparities in care.^{6,7} RSV and COVID-19 sit in sentinel surveillance, which report weekly case counts and does not include outcomes by age for all diseases.^{8,9}¹⁰

KEY FINDINGS

1

1 in 4 local govs offer no support for shingles.

167 of 229 local governments run shingles vaccination support projects, and a national program at 70% coverage would save USD 340 million in health expenditures.¹¹

2

Influenza hits older adults hardest.

Adults 65 and over made up 52.4% of total influenza hospitalizations in 2024 to 2025, a season costing 629.5 billion won in medical expenses.^{12,13}

3

Uptake differs sharply within the same group.

Influenza coverage reached 81.6% of adults 65 and over in 2024, while COVID-19 coverage reached 19.62%.^{14,15}

DISEASE & VACCINE SNAPSHOT*

DISEASE	CASES (RECENT)	OLDER ADULT CASES (65+)	NATIONAL RECOMMENDATION/ FUNDING
RSV	8,875 (2024)	Not reported	Recommended for 75+ and adults living with NCDs; not in the NIP
COVID-19	5,517,540 (2024)	Not reported	Recommended for 65+ and immunocompromised; funded for recommended groups
Influenza	3,860,000 (2024-25)	Not reported	Recommended 65+; free at 65+ under the NIP
Shingles	758,016 (2024)	Not reported	Recommended 50+; not in the NIP

ABOUT AP-CHAAI

The Asia-Pacific Consortium for Healthy Aging and Adult Immunization (AP-CHAAI) is a network of healthy aging and economics experts working with global partners to close the data and policy gaps that keep preventive care from delivering its full value. ap-chaai.org



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*Data in the disease burden and vaccine snapshot table is AP-CHAAI's estimate based on publicly available and verifiable government sources. Data relies on sentinel surveillance and the true burden is likely higher.