



Improving Recombinant Zoster Vaccination Rates in Patients Receiving Biologic Therapy in the Rheumatology Clinics at the Orlando VA Healthcare System.

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Problem Statement/ Background

- Herpes zoster is a painful rash that involves one to three adjacent dermatomes, secondary to reactivation of latent varicella-zoster virus (VZV).
- About 95 % of the U.S population has been exposed to VZV, and therefore are at risk of developing herpes zoster.
- Many patients with rheumatologic conditions are at higher risk for herpes zoster and related complications because of their immunocompromised state.
- Since 2017, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended the 2-dose series recombinant zoster vaccination (RZV) in all immunocompetent adults aged ≥ 50 years.
- In 2021, this recommendation was expanded to include adults aged ≥ 18 years who are or will be immunodeficient or immunosuppressed because of disease or therapy.



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Baseline Condition

- Scope: Patients seen in the Rheumatology clinic at the Orlando VA Healthcare System on biologic medications, targeted synthetic DMARDs (JAK inhibitors), or conventional synthetic (cs) DMARDs – specifically: methotrexate, azathioprine, leflunomide, or mycophenolate mofetil
- 801 patients aged ≥ 18 years who were prescribed biologics, JAK inhibitors, or cs-DMARDs from 2/25/2021 – 2/25/2022.
- **Only 31% of our patients on biologic therapy have been appropriately vaccinated against VZV**
- 427 of these patients were ≥ 50 years of age



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Aim Statement

- Increase the number of biologic or JAK inhibitor treated patients who receive at least the first dose of the RZV vaccine to 50% by 4/1/23.



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Root Cause Analysis

- Why did we miss RZV vaccines?
 - We focused on COVID vaccines first
 - Misconceptions and lack of awareness of importance of RZV vaccination.
 - We did not address it if age <50
 - Other priorities for rheumatology patients
 - Cannot vaccinate when VVC or phone appointments

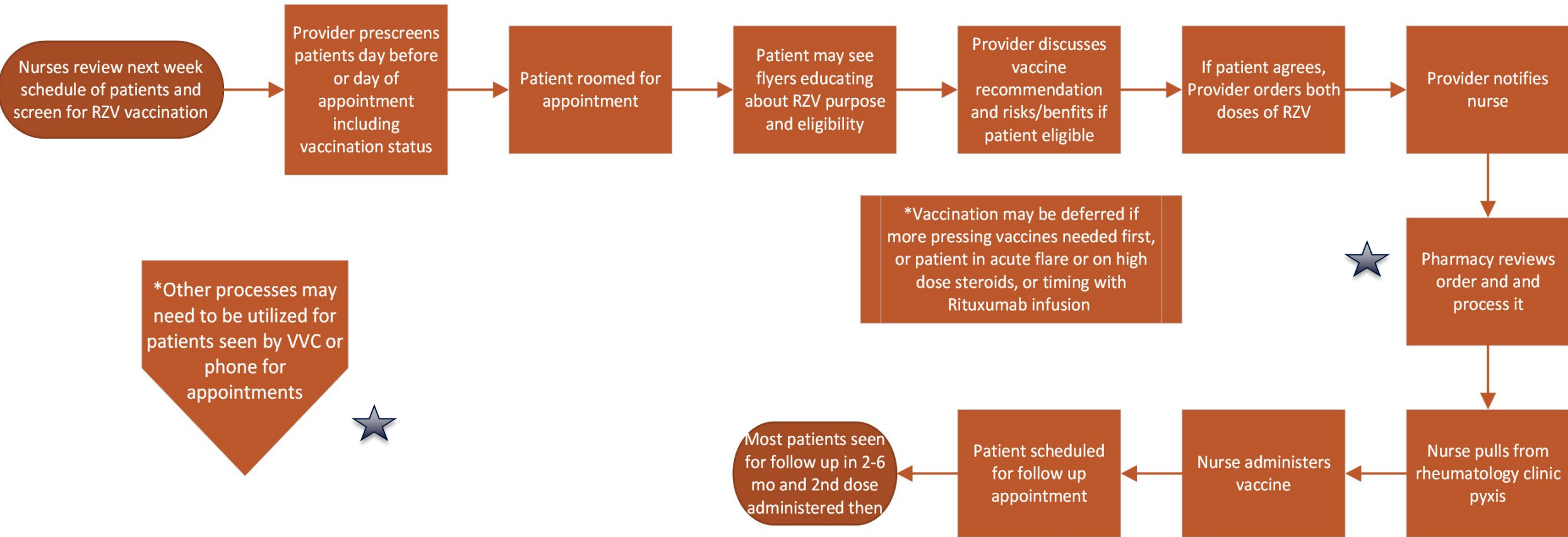


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Ideal Process Map



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Interventions

- Visual aid displayed in exam rooms encouraging patients to ask about RZV vaccination
- Providing education and counseling on the RZV vaccine at each clinic visit
- Presentation to rheumatology faculty about our baseline metrics and discussion about immunization recommendations for immunocompromised patients
- Process set up and publicized on how to order vaccines for patients at CBOCs
- Pre-visit planning done by the rheumatology nurses and providers which includes screening for RZV vaccination

Are you up to



Ordering Vaccines at CBOCs

1. Rheum identifies someone due for the vaccine
2. Rheum puts in the vaccine order(s) [this can be done in your current note/encounter under ORL Rheum ...] and enters a RTC for a vaccine clinic – see list below
3. HAS will call and schedule the patient for the respective vaccine clinic
4. Veteran comes into get vaccinated

List of Intervention clinics

Site	Name of Vaccination Clinic
Lake Nona	Rheumatology to vaccinate these patients in rheum clinic
Lake Baldwin	LKB PACT Nurse Inj Clinic
Viera/ Palm Bay	Vie Pc Nurse Injection Clinic
Daytona	Day Pc Nurse Injection Clinic
Kissimmee	Kis Pc Nurse Covid Vax- *they will give other vaccines as well
Deltona	Dlt Pc Nurse Covid Vax
Clermont	Cle Pc Nurse Covid Vax
Tavares	Tav Pc Nurse Covid Vax

age may put you at risk!

Ask about the Shingrix
vaccine!



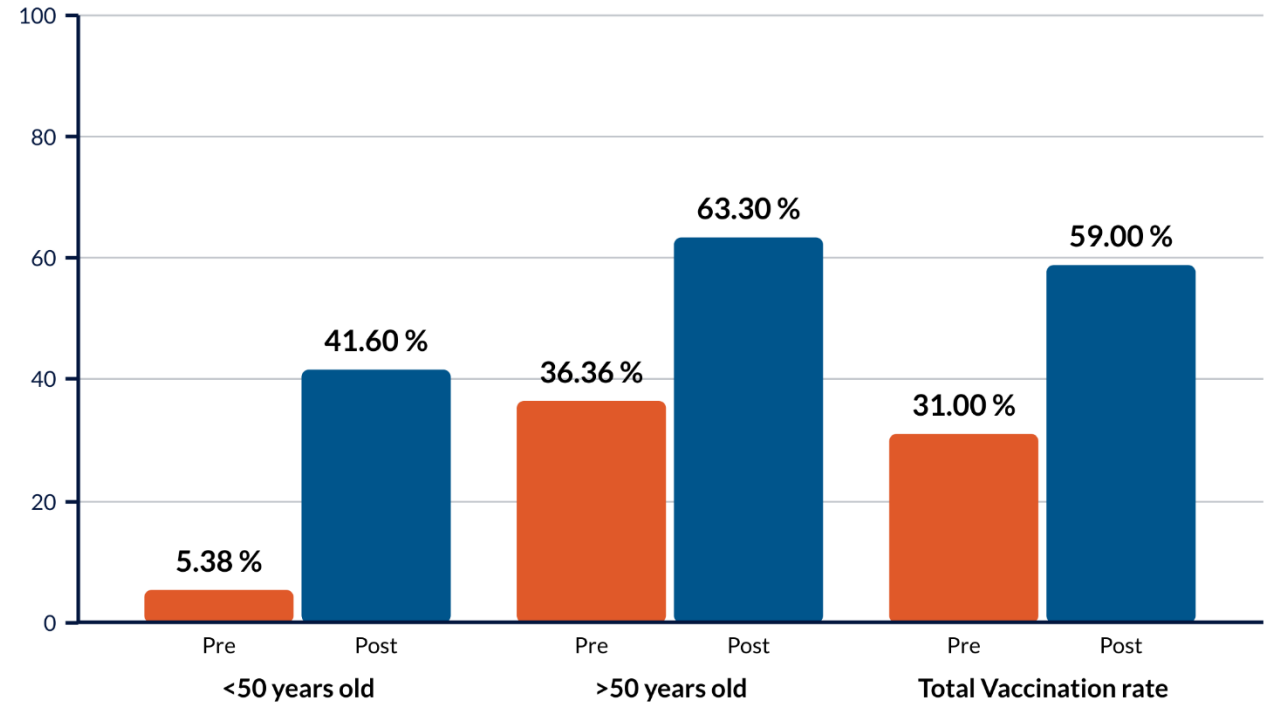
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Follow-up Condition

- 761 patients aged ≥ 18 years on above medications in the past year (5/1/22 –4/1/23)
- **59% (n=449) of our patients have been appropriately vaccinated against VZV with at least one dose.**
- Number of vaccines administered since 5/1/22: 282



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Next Steps

- Will continue to bring up topic at section meetings
- Expand initiative to other departments that treat immunosuppressed patients such as Gastroenterology, Dermatology, Transplant, and Nephrology.
- Educate Primary Care about indications and contraindications of RZV in immunosuppressed patients.
- Collect data again 4/1/24 about RZV vaccination for patients on biologics seen in our clinic in the last year



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