



American College of
Emergency Physicians®

ADVANCING EMERGENCY CARE 

POLICY STATEMENT

Approved January 2017

Guidelines for Smallpox Vaccination for Health Care Workers

Reaffirmed January 2017,
October 2011

Originally approved
September 2002

The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) believes that decisions regarding smallpox vaccinations for health care workers in response to possible terrorist threats or acts should be based on sound clinical judgment, sound public health principles, and local threat assessment information.

Health care workers, especially physicians and nurses, must be educated about and have access to appropriate resources regarding the recognition and treatment of smallpox, as well as the indications and contraindications for vaccination. Any smallpox vaccination initiative needs to be well considered, and careful screening of all participants is critical. In the absence of an index case or confirmation that a smallpox attack is imminent, vaccination should remain voluntary. If vaccination is considered likely by the government, ACEP urges the government to promote research into developing more effective vaccines with a higher patient safety profile.