Engaging the Public

CHAPTER 1
Introduction

Adult immunization rates have remained well below target immunization rates despite increased availability of adult vaccines. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that adults receive influenza, pneumococcal, whooping cough, and shingles vaccines. Adults are also recommended to receive other vaccines based on age, risk status, and job type. Women are also recommended to receive specific vaccines during pregnancy. The Healthy People 2020 target for seasonal influenza vaccination for adults is 70%, however only 43.6% of adults received a flu vaccine in the 2014-15 influenza season. Similarly, the HP2020 target for pneumococcal vaccination for adults over age 65 is 90%, but only 61.3% received the vaccine.

One reason for low adult vaccination rates is that vaccines are typically associated with childhood health care, and are not part of regular adult preventive care—many adults are simply unaware that they should be vaccinated. Fifty-eight percent of Americans admit to a gap in awareness of their own vaccination needs, and 19% of Americans think vaccination (except for influenza) is generally not recommended for adults.

By engaging the public, Immunization Programs have the opportunity to increase adults’ understanding of the risks of vaccine-preventable disease and the benefit of recommended vaccines. The highlighted activities related to engaging the public are:

- **Getting Started:** Collaborating with a statewide immunization coalition as a resource-efficient way to develop public education materials
- **Moving Forward:** Using existing connections to conduct outreach via presentations to community groups
- **Taking It to the Next Level:** Creating a dedicated staff role for communicating with providers and the public through both traditional and new media routes

Communicating with the Public about Adult Immunization

Many organizations provide tips and tools for communicating with the public about adult immunizations, including:

- **Communication Toolkit for Adults** from the National Public Health Information Coalition: [https://www.nphic.org/niam-adults](https://www.nphic.org/niam-adults)
- **Resources such as infographics and radio PSAs** from the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases: [http://www.adultvaccination.org/](http://www.adultvaccination.org/)
- **Resources such as fact sheets, videos, and PSAs** from the CDC: [http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/resources.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/resources.html)
- **Adult vaccination resources** from the Immunization Action Coalition (IAC): [http://www.vaccineinformation.org/adults](http://www.vaccineinformation.org/adults)
- **Resources for vaccinating the family** from Every Child by Two (ECBT): [http://www.vaccinateyourfamily.org](http://www.vaccinateyourfamily.org)
2015 AIM Annual Survey, 63 of 64 Immunization Programs responded to survey

**Promoting Vaccination of Pregnant Women**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Media</td>
<td>34%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
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*The promotion of vaccine specific information can be found at www.vaccinefactsandpolicy.org*
OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY
The Arizona Partnership for Immunization (TAPI), with support from the Arizona Immunization Program, created a flyer on vaccinating all family members.

BACKGROUND/IMPETUS FOR THE ACTIVITY
TAPI is a statewide coalition and non-profit organization that supports immunization efforts in the state. The Immunization Program has worked very closely with TAPI for many years, and designates funds to them for developing and distributing educational materials.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
A consumer-friendly flyer was designed by TAPI that described vaccines needed for all family members from babies to grandparents, including pets. The inclusion of pets was an effort to try a different way of talking about vaccines. Workgroups and subcommittees within TAPI provided feedback on the flyer’s content.

ROLE OF IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM AND OTHER AGENCIES/GROUPS INVOLVED
This activity was predominantly a TAPI activity, with input and funding from the Immunization Program. In addition, the flyer was approved by the Department’s Public Information Officer, which means it can include the Arizona Department of Health Services (AZDHS) logo.

DISSEMINATION
The flyer has been distributed at community events, such as health fairs. Intersection with other program activities. Educational materials developed by TAPI help support the public education activities of the Immunization Program.

FUNDING
TAPI activities are funded through the Arizona Immunization Program’s Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) grant funding, as well as foundations, community grants, and counties.

STAFFING
Immunization Program staff provided input on the flyer through participation on TAPI workgroups and subcommittees.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS
The flyer has undergone some revision based on stakeholder feedback. The current version can be found on the TAPI website.
**SUCCESSES**
- TAPI provides the Immunization Program with copies of flyers and other educational materials and makes the materials available for free on the TAPI website. This is a win for the Immunization Program, which has a very limited budget for printing educational materials.

**CHALLENGES**
- TAPI members include provider organizations, such as the state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and pharmacy associations, whose priorities may not always align with those of the Immunization Program.
- Similarly, the state has rules for materials, while TAPI and its stakeholders may have ideas for messaging that don’t match with state rules. Constant communication has helped.

**OTHER LESSONS LEARNED/ADVICE TO OTHER PROGRAMS**
- Having a strong relationship with this statewide immunization coalition has been invaluable. To keep the relationship strong, it is important to maintain consistent communication. The Immunization Program meets with TAPI once a week.
- In addition to making sure that materials contain accurate vaccination information, Immunization Programs can ensure that materials are consistent with other public health messages. For example, a graphic included in this flyer originally showed a boy riding a skateboard without a helmet, but the Immunization Program pointed out that he should be wearing one.

**RELEVANT RESOURCES**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**
Contact Dana Goodloe, Chief, Immunization Program Office at (602) 364-3639 or Dana.Goodloe@azdhs.gov.
OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY
The medical director of the Arkansas Immunization Program gives immunization-related presentations to community organizations, such as the local Rotary Club.

BACKGROUND/IMPETUS FOR THE ACTIVITY
The medical director for the Arkansas Immunization Program is a member of a local Rotary Club. Local Rotary Clubs, affiliates of Rotary International, bring together local business and professional leaders for regular meetings, often with a guest speaker, and Rotary has a history of being involved with global immunization efforts. The medical director has used this platform as a way to promote adult immunization in the community.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
Together with another Rotary member who is a polio survivor, the medical director for the Arkansas Immunization Program gave a presentation to her Rotary club on the successes of immunizations. This presentation led to invitations to present to other Rotary clubs, and to a variety of other service clubs (e.g., Kiwanis, women’s luncheon groups). At some presentations, the medical director reviews an easy-to-read version of the immunization schedule and answers questions.

ROLE OF IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM AND OTHER AGENCIES/GROUPS INVOLVED
The medical director of the Immunization Program develops and conducts these presentations.

DISSEMINATION
These presentations are an informal way for the Immunization Program to take advantage of opportunities to raise awareness among service-minded community members.

INTERSECTION WITH OTHER PROGRAM ACTIVITIES
The purpose of these presentations is mainly to raise awareness, rather than focus on specific activities conducted by the Immunization Program.

STAFFING
The medical director is the only Immunization Program staff person involved in this activity.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS
This activity is ongoing.
SUCCESSES

- Though the current talks have focused mainly on childhood vaccines, attendees have had questions that are applicable to themselves, and the presentations could easily be adapted to focus on adult immunization. Groups like Rotary attract civic leaders as members; these members can help "spread the word" in their workplaces, through their involvement in service projects and other community organizations, and within their own family (i.e., themselves, their children and grandchildren).

CHALLENGES

- Not applicable so far.

OTHER LESSONS LEARNED/ADVICE TO OTHER PROGRAMS

- In preparing this type of presentation, it is important to adjust the content (e.g., history of immunization vs. vaccine Q&A) based on the type of audience and meeting. Speakers should be prepared to answer questions, including those that may reflect common immunization misconceptions. Also, speakers should refer those seeking medical advice for individual-specific situations to their own provider. It is helpful to have an easy-to-understand handout.

- Groups like Rotary Club that have a history of involvement in immunization-related service activities are a good place to start.

RELEVANT RESOURCES

- A presentation similar to the Rotary presentation was given on April 9, 2015, at Public Health Grand Rounds, which is hosted each week at the Arkansas Department of Health. A video of that presentation can be found at: https://vimeopro.com/healthyarkansas/20150409.

- An example PowerPoint presentation that was given at a Rotary Club in northwest Arkansas: https://aim.site-ym.com/resource/collection/BAE93F84-9249-4F41-99C8-38A16645E182/AR_Jonesboro-Immunizations-10-13-15_(Read-Only).pdf The resources used for preparing the presentation are listed on the presentation slides.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Jennifer Dillaha, MD, Medical Director for Immunizations at the Arkansas Department of Health at (501) 661-2864 or Jennifer.Dillaha@Arkansas.gov.
OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY
The Philadelphia Immunization Program created a position for a dedicated, in-house Communications Coordinator, to improve public and provider communication around childhood and adult immunization topics.

BACKGROUND/IMPETUS FOR THE ACTIVITY
The impetus to create this position was two-fold. The first was to modernize the way the program communicates with providers and the public by incorporating electronic and digital communications (e.g., social media). The other was to streamline the process for getting communications approved and released. At the time this activity was initiated, the usual process to post new information on the website or send information to providers or the public required going through multiple levels of clearance through the press office for the City Department of Health.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
The Communications Coordinator, in place since 2008, has multiple functions and responsibilities. The Communications Coordinator serves as the primary web master and provides social media expertise for platforms like Twitter and Facebook. This individual ensures consistent use of the Immunization Program brand on all materials and disseminates information to Immunization Program constituencies (e.g., health advisories for providers). In the event of a public health emergency, the Coordinator assists with preparedness communications duties.

In addition to creating the coordinator position, the Immunization Program was able to secure the necessary permissions to have its own website for housing information for providers, allowing the Coordinator to push out communications and alerts more quickly, with approval from the division director.

ROLE OF IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM AND OTHER AGENCIES/GROUPS INVOLVED
This position is housed within the Immunization Program. The Immunization Program Manager and the Division of Disease Control Director were involved in getting the position and division of responsibilities approved by the City of Philadelphia Public Health Department. The Coordinator participates in other communications personnel meetings within the Mayor’s offices, aimed at establishing communications standards across the city.

DISSEMINATION
The Communications Coordinator is responsible for dissemination of all day-to-day materials coming from the Immunization Program. Urgent issues and requests for information from the media are still routed through the City’s Public Information Officer.

INTERSECTION WITH OTHER PROGRAM ACTIVITIES
All program activities with a provider or public education component work with the Communications Coordinator.
FUNDING
The position is funded through the program’s federal Vaccines for Children (VFC) and 317 grants, reflecting the shared responsibility for both childhood and adult immunization materials.

STAFFING
One person holds the position of Communications Coordinator.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS
This position has been in place for several years, and the program expects that federal grant funding will continue to support it.

SUCCESSES
• Creating this new position was very helpful. This was facilitated by the availability of federal funding to support the position, and the fact that many city government employees are contractors, not civil service staff. Human resources activities have been outsourced mainly to non-profit public health management agencies.
• The program is able to disseminate information more quickly.

CHALLENGES
• Some ongoing challenges include a non-optimal information technology infrastructure/environment (e.g., slow internet speeds, strict firewalls, network volatility issues). Other challenges include barriers to the procurement of advanced software to support ever-expanding communication initiatives and longer wait times for software or hardware procurement due to government “red tape.”
• The software used for the provider messaging system was custom-built for the Philadelphia Department of Public Health as an emergency contact system for the Public Health Preparedness Program. This software is not ideal for the Immunization Program’s purposes. The biggest issue is in contact management. A database of Immunization Program contacts is housed in the city’s immunization information system (IIS), which cannot be linked to the messaging system. There is no way around this issue given currently available resources, so the Immunization Program must maintain two separate contact lists.

OTHER LESSONS LEARNED/ADVICE TO OTHER PROGRAMS
• Because the Communications Coordinator sees materials from multiple areas within the Immunization Program, this individual helps ensure that policies and technical documents are written and distributed consistently.
The Communications Coordinator looks for opportunities to collaborate with staff in other departments with certain skills (e.g., graphics design) to learn from them and help improve the materials developed by the Immunization Program.

Immunization Programs considering a messaging system may be best served by building messaging capability into their IIS instead of building a separate system. Programs should refer to people familiar with common email newsletter programs to get more details on the specifications needed for a modern messaging system.

RELEVANT RESOURCES

Philadelphia Communications Coordinator Job posting/description:

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Justin Gero, Communications Coordinator, at (215) 685-6854 or Justin.gero@phila.gov.

REFERENCES

7. 2015 AIM Annual Survey, 63 of 64 state/city/territorial Immunization Programs completed the survey that was administered online April - June 2015.

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