Engaging parents to advocate for immunizations: Results from an evaluation of the Immunity Community program

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Background and program description
The problem – vaccine hesitancy
Kindergartners with school immunization exemptions by school district, Washington, school year 2016-2017

Communities can influence vaccine hesitancy

Parents want to do what’s best for their child

Parents use social networks to gather information

Most parents immunize their children

The voice of immunizing parents is unheard

Given compelling information, immunizing parents become activated
Immunity Community brand & logo
Parent Action Guide
Viral images

1. "We believe... as new parents we're doing everything possible to keep our baby safe and healthy. Vaccination is the more way to do that. - Jason and Sara, Washington"

2. "Nothing says love like getting vaccinated."

3. "When you get immunized, we're all protected."

4. "100% cute 100% vaccinated."

5. "I believe... vaccination is the best way to keep my daughters and our whole community healthy. - Sarah, Washington"


7. "I'm one of the majority of parents who vaccinate their children."

8. "We're protected against 14 diabolical diseases."
Evaluation aims & activities
Evaluation - Aims

Document the specific details of the intervention to facilitate the spread of the intervention

Provide formative feedback for continuous improvement in each phase of the pilot

Gather evidence that the intervention contributed to the desired outcomes

Identify best practices and factors that contribute to successful implementation
Evaluation activities

- Observation & document review
- Activity & media tracking
- Parent survey
- Key informant interviews
- Parent focus groups
Evaluation findings
Successful implementation & expansion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 sites recruited</td>
<td>7 sites</td>
<td>10 sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 new sites recruited</td>
<td>7 new sites recruited</td>
<td>3 sites continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 PAs</td>
<td>13 PAs</td>
<td>14 PAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial PA training</td>
<td>Initial PA training</td>
<td>Initial PA training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional training</td>
<td>Additional training</td>
<td>Kickoff event for returning PAs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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- Technical assistance
- Enhanced technical assistance
- Program materials
- Expanded program materials
- Additional materials for PAs to share
- VaxNW website, including password protected pages
- VaxNW website updated with new pages
- VaxNW website updated with new resources
Parent advocates take action to raise awareness

Sites monitor vaccination rates

Educate parents

Generate conversation via social media
Parent advocate in action: Alisson

- 17 conversations
- 11 emails
- 2 events
- 11 dissemination of IC materials
- 5 meetings
- 30 planning activities
- 11 social media posts
Outcomes – parent survey methods

- Pre/post, cross-sectional web-based survey
- Purpose
- Response rates
- Analysis
Parental knowledge of vaccine-related issues increased

- I have heard/read that some parents are refusing or delaying vaccinations for their child(ren)
  - Pre: 98.3%
  - Post: 99.2%

- I have heard/read information about "vaccine hesitancy"
  - Pre: 77.5%
  - Post: 79.4%

- I know the vaccination and exemption rates in my state
  - Pre: 29.6%
  - Post: 30.7%

- I know the vaccination and exemption rates in my child's childcare/daycare/school
  - Pre: 18.1%
  - Post: 24.4%

- I personally know children who were harmed by vaccines
  - Pre: 9.6%
  - Post: 8.4%

Percent answering correctly

What percentage of people in your community do you think need to be vaccinated for everyone to be protected from disease?

- Pre: 75.9%
- Post: 78.4%
Parental attitudes more supportive of vaccination

Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with statement

I am concerned about other parents not vaccinating their child(ren)
- Pre: 81.2%
- Post: 88.6%

Vaccines are given to children when they are too young
- Pre: 31.0%
- Post: 24.7%

Individual people are responsible for choosing whether or not to vaccinate their child(ren)
- Pre: 70.9%
- Post: 66.9%

Average rating
(1=not confident/concerned, 10=extremely confident/concerned)

How confident are you that vaccinating your child is a good decision?
- Pre: 8.7
- Post: 9.0

How concerned are you about the safety of vaccines?
- Pre: 4.8
- Post: 4.6
Parental attitudes more supportive of vaccination

Pre

- Very hesitant: 3.8%
- Somewhat hesitant: 18.8%
- Not too hesitant: 38.7%
- Not at all hesitant: 38.7%

Post

- Very hesitant: 3.1%
- Somewhat hesitant: 10.9%
- Not too hesitant: 45.0%
- Not at all hesitant: 41.0%

38% decrease in parents reporting vaccine hesitancy
Messages reach community at large

**Family Matters**  
By Bonnie Rochman

**VACCINES**

**How Social Networks Influence Parents’ Decision to Vaccinate**

A small group of parent advocates is mobilizing “gentle propaganda” against vaccine naysayers.

By Bonnie Rochman @brochman  | April 15, 2013  | 0

At her son’s preschool near Seattle, Robin Haight is a foot soldier in the vaccine wars. She arranged for a pediatrician to speak about vaccines at the home of a school parent. She put up posters — she calls them “gentle propaganda” — that touted the importance of immunization in stopping the spread of disease. Her husband helped create a spreadsheet to track which children at the school are missing which vaccinations.

Some parents have said that Haight’s pro-vaccination message has no place at preschool, that it’s disrespectful and patronizing, that the decision to vaccinate a child is nobody else’s business. One mother got so emotional that she broke out in hives. But Haight thinks a conversation is critical, and the latest research published in the journal *Pediatrics* backs her up.

“I’m just trying to let people know that if you don’t vaccinate your children, it might affect other children’s health,” says Haight. “It directly affects a community of young children. How do we not talk about this?”

(MORE: Jenny McCarthy, Vaccine Expert? A Quarter of Parents Trust Celebrities)
OPEP (Organization of Parent Education Programs) adopted changes to risk management manual → Potential to impact 10,000 Washington state families
The Immunity Community: A Community Engagement Strategy for Reducing Vaccine Hesitancy

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Parental concerns about vaccine safety have grown in the United States and abroad, resulting in delayed or skipped immunizations (often called “vaccine hesitancy”). To address vaccine hesitancy in Washington State, a public–private partnership of health organizations implemented and evaluated a 3-year community intervention, called the “Immunity Community.” The intervention mobilized parents who value immunization and provided them with tools to engage in positive dialogue about immunizations in their communities. The evaluation used qualitative and quantitative methods, including focus groups, interviews, and pre and post online surveys of parents, to assess perceptions about and reactions to the intervention, assess facilitators and barriers to success, and track outcomes including parental knowledge and attitudes. The program successfully engaged parent volunteers to be immuni-

Keywords: vaccine hesitancy; community engagement; social marketing

INTRODUCTION

In recent years parental concerns about vaccine safety have grown in the United States and abroad, resulting in delayed or skipped immunizations (often called “vaccine hesitancy”). When fewer children are immunized, more people are at risk of getting dangerous infectious diseases. In 2011, Washington State’s school entry exemption rate was 6.2%, a figure that had doubled over the previous 10 years and was 3 times the national average (Immunization Program CHILD Profile, Statewide Summary of Immunization Coverage for Kindergarten SY 2009-2010, 2010).
Related work & next steps
Provider Intervention

- Randomized controlled trial
  - 56 clinics in Western Washington
- Models an evidence-based approach to provider communication with vaccine hesitant parents
- Based on three years of needs assessment and pilot work in western Washington
- Testing
  - Physician confidence
  - Parent attitudes
Past, present and future

Past
- Test of multipronged, local health department driven approach (mobile immunization clinics, IC, and school nurse toolkit)

Present
- Immunity Community continues
- Vaccine Hesitancy Focus Groups
- Revamp of Immunity Community website

Future
- Prenatal provider assessment and development
- Incubate/support other innovate approaches
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Lessons learned
Success factors

Organizational/leadership support

Strong TA and support from program staff: responsiveness, resources and materials

Site with culture of active, engaged parents
Challenges

Recruitment

Implementation

Replication & sustainability