

11-01

STATEMENT OF POLICY IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Policy

Immunization has been one of the most successful and safest public health measures available to populations worldwide, with an unparalleled record of disease reduction and prevention.^{1,2} Successful public health immunization programs rely on having adequate data to manage the multiple components inherent to such a program. Immunization information systems (IIS or immunization registries), are a powerful tool for collecting, storing, analyzing, and acting upon data relevant to managing successful immunization programs. The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) supports the standardization and consistent use of IIS and requests that the federal government fund the expansion and linkage of this important tool.

NACCHO strongly urges the federal government to support the following:

- An interoperable system allowing for information exchange between state- and local-level immunization registries and between all pertinent local users and the relevant IIS;
- Ensure that the connections and capacities between local and state registries, and between local users and the relevant registries, meet all requirements of each stage of the definition of “meaningful use;”
- Ensure local input when establishing uniform standards for the diverse array of existing registries;
- Ensure local input when developing laws and policies to facilitate exchange of data not only across State and local lines but also across the nation;
- Assistance with policies and technological components to support future international information exchange;
- Assistance with development of laws and policies to facilitate data exchange between education, public health, and medical care providers and systems, including immunization coalitions as appropriate;
- Assistance with policy and funds to enable exchange of data between IIS and electronic health records; and,
- Financial support for the technology upgrades and technical maintenance necessary for continued local participation in IIS.

At the local level, NACCHO urges federal and state governments to support the following:

- The ability of local health departments (LHDs) to exchange information within and across state and local levels;
- Appropriate technology for LHDs to receive, record, and transmit immunization data;
- The ability of LHDs to employ staff with the technological skills required to manage registry operations locally, nationally and internationally;
- The ability of LHDs to employ staff with the technical and epidemiologic skills required to effectively analyze data and in order to formulate an appropriate local public health response; and,



- The ability of local school and public health personnel to use immunization registries; and
- Use of IIS to include results of tuberculosis (TB) testing, where appropriate, especially in jurisdictions where school entry requirements include both immunization and TB test results.

Justification

Appropriate immunization levels across the life span will be difficult to achieve and maintain unless public health officials can monitor the extent of vaccination within the population. Given the mobility of the American populace in terms of geography and in regard to insurance coverage and use of medical care, it is imperative that interoperable and coordinated local and state-level IIS' are supported by the federal government as part of a larger effort to adopt and support the use of health information technology and electronic health records.³ This support needs to be sufficient for the registries to meet the current and planned expansion of the definition of meaningful use at all times. In addition, it is important in an increasingly global world that IIS begin to prepare for the possibility of international immunization data exchange. Several IIS goals within Healthy People 2020 exist, such as increasing both the proportion of children younger than six years of age participating in IIS and the number of states with adolescents that have two or more age-appropriate immunizations recorded in IIS⁴. *The Guide to Community Preventive Services* recommends the use of IIS based on strong evidence of effectiveness in increasing immunization rates.⁵

The benefits of IIS are many, beyond those already mentioned. Additional benefits include the following:

- Preventing missed opportunities to administer vaccine;
- Avoiding unnecessary vaccination due to incomplete or missing vaccination records;
- Improving emergency response at the state and local levels;
- Expanding the number and types of community sites where people can receive vaccinations, while linking information back to a medical home;
- Identifying underserved communities or populations;
- Identifying under-immunized children and facilitating the recall of those not fully immunized;
- Linking immunization records not only within jurisdictions, but also across the country and internationally; and,
- Assessing population data on access to vaccines and inequities in coverage in a changing medical care environment.

Public health immunization services are primarily provided at the local level. Federal support with funding, policies, and legal changes that promote the use of IIS will assist LHDs and their state and local partners in their efforts to ensure that the American public remains free of the threats posed by vaccine-preventable diseases.

Record of Action

*Approved by NACCHO Board of Directors
March 18, 2011*

References

1. Roush, SW and Murphy. (2007). TV and the Vaccine-Preventable Disease Table Working Group. Historical comparisons of morbidity and mortality for vaccine-preventable diseases in the United States. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 298(18):2155-2163.
2. Ten great public health achievements – United States 1900-1999. Retrieved February 23, 2011, from www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm4850bx.htm.
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4. Public Health Service. Healthy People 2020. Retrieved October 27, 2010, from <http://www.healthypeople.gov/hp2020/Objectives/TopicArea.aspx?id=30&TopicArea=Immunization+and+InfectiousDiseases>.
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *The Guide to Community Prevention Services*. Retrieved October 27, 2010, from <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/vaccines/universally/index.html>.