Immunization at NACCHO: Reinforcing the Power of Vaccination to Protect Public Health

The Role of Local Health Departments: Connecting Communities to Services

Vaccines are one of the most successful and cost-effective ways to protect against infectious diseases and death. Local health departments (LHDs) play a critical role in providing and connecting people in their communities with immunization services and counseling. These local agencies work with public and private sector physicians and other stakeholders to assure effective immunization practices, disease surveillance and reporting, education and outreach, and program oversight. Nearly all LHDs provide immunization services, with 88% providing services for adults and children (see Figure 1).

Immunization is one of the safest public health measures available, with an unparalleled record of disease reduction and prevention. Still, efforts to promote vaccination are needed more now than ever. With a resurgence of diseases such as measles and mumps and emerging domestic and global health threats such as COVID-19 and influenza, LHDs can increase vaccine access to ensure people in their communities stay safe and healthy.

The Role of NACCHO: Supporting Local Health Department Efforts

NACCHO facilitates coordination among the nation’s nearly 3,000 LHDs through the Community Health Program, which manages communications, outreach, technical assistance, and training resources for a nationwide network of public health professionals who work in immunization at LHDs.

NACCHO’s Immunization program is committed to helping LHDs increase their capacity to prevent and control vaccine-preventable diseases and meet nationally established immunization standards. As the national voice for LHDs, NACCHO ensures that members have input on federal immunization policies and guidance. Further, NACCHO staff and workgroup representatives provide critical representation on leading immunization coalitions and committees.

Immunization Resources for Local Health Departments

At the local level, NACCHO connects LHDs with the latest best practices, tools, and resources from across the country. Through active dialogue with members, NACCHO provides thought leadership on immunization policy and encourages peer-to-peer collaboration.

FIGURE 1. TRENDS IN IMMUNIZATION

- 88% of local health departments provide adult immunizations
- 88% of local health departments provide child immunizations
- 89% of local health departments have implemented an immunization registry
- 84% of local health departments have billed a third-party payer for immunization services

Source: NACCHO’s 2016 and 2019 National Profiles of Local Health Departments
learning among local public health professionals.

Additionally, NACCHO employs a multi-channel communications approach to ensure awareness of these resources, encourage adoption of innovative new tools and best practices among membership, and increase the visibility of LHD immunization efforts.

For more information, please visit www.naccho.org/programs/community-health/infectious-disease/immunization or email the Immunization Project Team at immunization@naccho.org.

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KEY PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

NACCHO staff provide capacity building assistance, support, and leadership on immunization initiatives.

Engaging LHD Immunization Experts
Convened on a monthly basis, NACCHO’s Immunization Workgroup provides expert opinion on immunization policy and practice to prevent illness and death from vaccine-preventable disease and emerging infectious diseases. The Workgroup also serves as a mechanism for peer sharing and learning about immunization practices and policies. For example, NACCHO’s Immunization Workgroup members develop policy statements to provide direction for local policies. Workgroup members address emerging immunization issues, identify and share best practices, and review immunization initiatives.

Increasing Vaccine Confidence
Through the Local Public Health Initiatives to Increase Vaccine Confidence project, NACCHO funds two LHDs to implement efforts to identify pockets of low vaccination within their communities, implement pro-vaccination information campaigns, and conduct strategic planning to identify solutions and processes to address vaccine equity. From this work, NACCHO developed a fact sheet highlighting the important role of LHDs in addressing vaccine confidence.

Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy
NACCHO selected three LHDs to participate in the Equipping LHDs to Address Vaccine Hesitancy project. NACCHO provides workforce capacity building assistance by placing one staff consultant dedicated to implementing efforts to address vaccine hesitancy in the jurisdiction. LHD projects include building partnerships with community stakeholders, tailoring and disseminating vaccine information and resources, and identifying areas of need to improve vaccine confidence.

Increasing Vaccine Uptake
In the Supporting Local Health Departments to Increase Vaccine Uptake through COVID-19 project, NACCHO funds ten LHD demonstration sites to identify and implement strategies to maintain and increase immunization coverage levels of routinely recommended vaccines including influenza, as well as protect vulnerable communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts facilitate LHDs’ ability to reach at-risk or vulnerable populations with vaccines and related information and leverage tools, resources and materials from partners at the national, state, and local levels with the goal of increasing vaccine uptake equitably.