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 90% providing services for adults and 88% providing services for 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 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 Infectious Disease Prevention and Control program, which manages communications, outreach, technical assistance, and training resources for a nationwide network of infectious disease professionals who work in immunization, HIV/STI, and other infectious disease programs 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 such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, the Department of Health and Human Services’ National Vaccine Advisory Committee, and the Adult Vaccine Access Coalition.

FIGURE 1. TRENDS IN IMMUNIZATION

- 90% of local health departments provide adult immunizations
- 88% of local health departments provide child immunizations
- 85% 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 2013 and 2016 National Profiles of Local Health Departments
At the local level, NACCHO connects LHDs with the latest best practices, tools, and resources from across the country and regularly convenes an immunization workgroup comprised of local health officials, programmatic health department staff, and immunization coalition members. Workgroup members discuss emerging immunization issues, identify and share best practices, and review immunization initiatives. Additionally, NACCHO staff provide capacity building assistance, support, and leadership on immunization projects and initiatives.

Immunization Resources for Local Health Departments

Through active dialogue with members, NACCHO provides thought leadership on immunization policy and encourages peer-to-peer learning among local public health professionals. For example, NACCHO’s Immunization Workgroup members develop policy statements to provide direction for local policies. Additionally, the NACCHO Toolbox serves as a repository for immunization toolkits covering topics such as immunization, influenza, human papillomavirus and emerging practices related to billing.

NACCHO employs a multi-channel communications approach – including the Essential Elements of Local Public Health blog, The Transmission Digest e-newsletter, and social media channels – 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.

Acknowledgments

This fact sheet was made possible through the support of the Cooperative Agreement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, #SU38HM000449-05. NACCHO is grateful for this support. The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the sponsors.

KEY PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

**Immunization Workgroup**
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.

**ID/IZ Forum**
The Infectious Disease and Immunization (ID/IZ) Forum brings together leaders in immunization and infectious disease programs at LHDs in large jurisdictions. The forum serves as a platform for members to engage in peer learning and provides a voice to advocate for LHDs on federal laws, policies, and regulations.

**HPV Prevention Project**
At its conclusion, 20 LHDs were funded to identify strategies and develop an action plan to improve vaccination rates for human papillomavirus (HPV). NACCHO collected best practices and lessons learned from the sites. NACCHO continues to support LHD capacity on HPV activities with resources and tools.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Michelle Cantu, MPH
Director, Infectious Disease & Immunization
202-507-4238
mcantu@naccho.org

Kimberly Sharpe-Scott, MPH
Senior Program Analyst, Immunization
202-595-1123
ksharpe-scott@naccho.org

The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to improve the health of communities by strengthening and advocating for local health departments.

1201 I St, NW, 4th Floor Washington, DC 20005
P 202-783-5550 F 202-783-1583
© 2018. National Association of County and City Health Officials.