

Opportunities & Barriers to Improve Immunization Rates Among Medicaid-Covered Children & Pregnant People: Targeting Medicaid Partnerships Community of Practice (CoP)

Project Overview

Partnerships between Medicaid and immunization programs are critical to improving immunization rates for children and pregnant people with Medicaid coverage. AcademyHealth, the National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP) and Immunize Colorado coordinated efforts for a three-year CDC funded cooperative agreement to implement new state-based strategies and policies to address immunization gaps among low-income pregnant people and children. The project's objectives were to make changes to state Medicaid policies or outreach procedures to facilitate vaccination of children living in poverty, implement policies that include providers caring for pregnant people and/or adults as covered vaccinators, and improve Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS) and Immunization Information System (IIS) information exchange to support outreach and targeted interventions. Embarking on this project at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, CoP state teams faced common challenges including but not limited to staff bandwidth due to COVID-19 response efforts, workforce challenges, vaccine misinformation, and capacity of external partners. Michigan's CoP team was comprised of Medicaid agency, Immunization Division, Immunization Information System (IIS), and Maternal and Infant Health Division staff.

Michigan's individual goals for this project were:

1. Increase awareness and knowledge of the HEDIS Combination 3 with providers of Michigan Medicaid pediatric population.
2. Increase collaboration of Medicaid, WIC, MCH, and Immunization programs to increase immunization rates among low-income children and pregnant women in Michigan.
3. Improve engagement and outreach to increase vaccination of pregnant women in Michigan.
4. Increase vaccine confidence and address vaccine hesitancy and concerns related to racial disparities.
5. Increase pediatric and adolescent vaccination rates.

Project Successes

Patient & Provider Engagement/Education

- MDHHS launched a pilot program in Detroit to increase pharmacy enrollment in the Vaccines for Children program.

- The Maternal Infant Health Program (MIHP) and Medicaid collaborated to provide education to home visitors around motivational interviewing and other discussion points to encourage COVID-19 vaccinations.
- Provided resources to OB/GYNs to educate their pregnant patients and promote vaccinations.
- Created "I Vaccinate" campaign to communicate with public about coadministration of flu and COVID-19 vaccines.
- The Division of Immunizations collaborated with health centers to create a webinar series for staff in school health clinics. Webinars educated providers on decreasing vaccination rates and strategies to vaccinate their patients.
- The Division of Immunizations collaborated with school superintendents to campaign for COVID-19 vaccines and other routine immunizations in advance of back to school.
- Established new policy expanding age range that pharmacists can vaccinate individuals 3-18 years of age.

Stakeholder Collaboration

- With support from the CoP, Michigan established regular collaboration between the Division of Immunizations and State Medicaid Agency. For instance, the Immunization Division and Medicaid provided updates to Medicaid health plans and joint letters to beneficiaries.
- The Division of Immunizations shared immunization data from the Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR) with Medicaid health plans and WIC agencies to estimate child vaccination rates and target resources. Plans now receive daily feeds of their members' immunization status.
- In collaboration with state agencies and local partners, Michigan worked to address disparities in vaccine access and uptake by developing resources and communications focused on areas with higher social vulnerability indices (SVIs) and provider deserts.

Funding

- Medicaid established a bonus program for managed care organizations and providers to incentivize increased immunization rates, which included a focus on closing the racial disparity gap. Plans were required to submit strategic plans on how they will increase COVID-19 vaccination rates.
- Medicaid increased reimbursement rates for COVID-19 vaccinations to be equal to the Medicare rates in order to encourage providers serving Medicaid patients to provide COVID-19 vaccines.

COVID: By the Numbers*

In Michigan, 6,395,452 people or 64% of residents are vaccinated.

A total of 11,788,796 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in Michigan.

(*All data as of August 14, 2023)

Source: [COVID-19 Vaccine Dashboard \(michigan.gov\)](https://michigan.gov/covid-19-vaccine-dashboard)

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