

Opportunities & Barriers to Improve Immunization Rates Among Medicaid-Covered Children & Pregnant Women: 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 women 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 women and children. The project's objectives were to make changes to state Medicaid policies or outreach procedures to facilitate vaccination of children, implement policies that include providers caring for pregnant women and/or adults as covered vaccinators, and increase utilization of Medicaid resources for Immunization Information System (IIS) sustainability. 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, and capacity of external partners such as IIS vendors. Texas's Community of Practice (CoP) team was comprised of Medicaid agency, Immunization Unit, and IIS staff.

Texas's individual goals for this project were:

1. Strengthen collaboration and "cross talk" among agencies
2. Improve cross-agency data issues
3. Improve access to vaccines for all, including for pregnant persons, children & adolescents

Project Successes

Stakeholder Engagement

- Obtained input for potential improvement to the VFC enrollment system.
- Continued communication processes between the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and outpatient pharmacy providers.
- Incorporated the voice and perspective of the provider community.

Cross-Agency Collaboration

- The Texas Health and Human Services (HHSC) and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) team now routinely discuss immunization-related programs and projects.
- Additionally, HHSC and DSHS colleagues arrange ad hoc meetings, as necessary, in order to discuss public health emergencies, routine immunization initiatives, and other pertinent topics.

Data Analysis

- Project team members discussed the logistics of sharing Medicaid enrollment data for use in matching with ImmTrac2 data.
- Data sharing began as single file for algorithm creation and testing; additional files were sent for matching and evaluation.
- A monthly data sharing model for matching and reporting was fully operational.



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