

# 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 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, vaccine misinformation, and capacity of external partners such as IIS vendors. Wyoming's Community of Practice (CoP) team was comprised of Medicaid agency, Immunization Unit, and IIS staff.

## Wyoming's individual goals for this project were:

1. Improve connections to and data quality within the IIS.
2. Develop quality connections between the IIS and the Medicaid Data Warehouse so data can be freely and accurately shared between these systems.
3. Adopt best practices to engage both providers and families to improve immunization rates statewide.

## Project Successes

### Improved Patient & Provider Engagement/Education

- The Immunization Unit created a state-wide vaccination media campaign called "Thank a Vaccine" in order to increase vaccine confidence. This campaign focuses on routine childhood and adult vaccines, bringing awareness to the efficacy of vaccines. The Unit completed several messaging campaigns to increase immunization rates, including a Facebook campaign to promote routine immunizations for children and a campaign promoting information on coadministration of COVID-19 and flu vaccines.
- The Immunization Unit embedded vaccination and testing opportunities into community events (e.g., Rodeos, County Fairs).

- The Medicaid agency established a statewide texting program to better communicate with Medicaid enrollees. Approximately, 90,000 Medicaid recipients received text messages through this mechanism.
- The Immunization Unit established a Health Equity Workgroup that focused on analyzing race and ethnicity data. The Workgroup sent out tailored and specific letters to Wyoming providers to highlight their race and ethnicity data and suggest opportunities to improve the rates.
- The Maternal and Child Health Unit and Wyoming Medical Society collaborated to sponsor a series of ECHOs focused on Bright Futures, with the goal of improving provider knowledge and implementation of well-child and adolescent care best practices. Vaccination was integrated into this programming.

## Expanded Stakeholder Collaboration

- Tribal partners were engaged in activities throughout this project period. A Tribal advisory group meets quarterly with Medicaid agency staff to facilitate bi-directional communication. In addition, the Immunization Unit met with the Wind River Tribal Health agencies to share updated vaccination information, as it was available.

## Identified Opportunities for Data Analysis

- Immunization and Medicaid staff initiated the process of integrating IIS with the Medicaid Data Warehouse and leveraging the Master Patient Index (MPI) functionality to share Immunization and Medicaid data. There were unexpected delays with this project, but the team expects to be able to leverage this capability to analyze and identify gaps.

## COVID: By the Numbers\*

In Wyoming, 353,727 people or 61% of the state has received at least one dose.

Overall, 307,619 people or 53% of Wyoming's population are considered fully vaccinated.

(\*All data as of May 10, 2023)

Source: [USAFACTS](#)

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