

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. LHDs serve as critical safety net immunization providers within their communities. Immunization is the most frequent clinical service provided by LHDs, with 88% providing services for adults and children. Additionally, 89% of LHDs use immunization registries, an essential mechanism to record immunization delivery and track vaccine coverage.

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 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.

[FACT SHEET]

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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.

Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy

Through the Equipping LHDs to Address Vaccine Hesitancy project, NACCHO supports one consultant staff member placed in selected LHDs to implement efforts addressing the delay or refusal of vaccines among priority populations identified within the jurisdiction. NACCHO provides workforce and capacity building support to assist LHDs in 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 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.

Partnering for Vaccine Equity

Through the national Partnering for Vaccine Equity project, NACCHO works with LHDs to increase flu and COVID-19 vaccine confidence and uptake among racial and ethnic minority adults experiencing disparities in vaccination coverage. NACCHO supports LHDs to identify and address vaccine hesitancy, engage community stakeholders and influential messengers to support vaccine messaging, provide education and vaccine delivery at the community level, and facilitate relationships between vaccine providers and the community to increase vaccine confidence and access opportunities.

Building COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence

The Equipping Local Health Departments to Build COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence project provides LHDs training, technical assistance, and other resources to increase equitable COVID-19 vaccine uptake, particularly among priority populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 disease and complications. LHDs receive support for collaborating and partnering with stakeholders that serve as trusted messengers at the community level to support messaging for COVID-19 vaccination.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

The Immunization Project Team at immunization@naccho.org or visit www.naccho.org/programs/community-health/infectious-disease/immunization.

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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.

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