

Immunization for San Diego Kids

First 5 Commission of San Diego Emerging Needs Grant

Project Summary

In San Diego County between 2006 and 2009, the number of children ages 19-36 months who completed the basic immunization series dropped from 85% to 77%¹. In 2010, San Diego County had the highest personal belief exemption (PBE) rates for school-based immunization requirements of any Southern California county (3.34%)². The need for intervention is compelling — at current immunization rates, San Diego children ages 0 through 5 continue to be at the threshold for vaccine preventable disease outbreaks.

Funded by the First 5 Commission of San Diego, the purpose of the Immunizations for San Diego Kids three-year project is to increase the percentage of children 0 through 5 who complete the basic immunization series and to decrease the percentage of personal belief exemptions in San Diego. Rady Children's Hospital will partner with Children's Physicians Medical Group (CPMG) and the American Academy of Pediatrics, California Chapter 3 (AAP-CA3) to implement the following strategies:

Strategy 1: Create focus-group tested immunization education tools (handout and DVD) designed to motivate vaccine-resistant families to immunize their children. Educational messages will inform parents about the need to have every child fully immunized by age two, even at times when the child is mildly ill, and will provide research-based information to balance the risks and benefits of immunizations.

Strategy 2: In partnership with AAP-CA3, implement physician training in six targeted CPMG offices, chosen based on PBE refusal rates. Physicians will receive intensive physician-led training including interactive role-playing scenarios focusing on how to effectively communicate with parents/caregivers who refuse immunizations. The session will be videotaped and disseminated widely.

Strategy 3: Design and implement a Reminder Recall program targeting CPMG offices to facilitate immunizations for children ages two and under. Families with children 18 months of age who are identified as not fully immunized will be contacted and, if the parent is willing, an appointment will be scheduled for the child. The immunization education tools will be distributed via mail and electronically.

Strategy 4: Encourage physicians in the pilot project to be connected to the San Diego Immunization Registry (SDIR) and ensure they are linked.

Strategy 5: Train medical assistants (MAs) at RCHSD Specialty Care Clinics to ask all parents/caregivers of children ages 0 through 5 if their child is up-to-date on immunizations. If not, the MA will give a brief message to encourage them to visit the child's Primary Care Provider for the immunization needed and will distribute the education tool. The medical assistants will also refer parents who have immediate questions to an Immunization Advocate (RN) who will be available via phone.

Strategy 6: The use of social media will be explored to disseminate information and educational tools regarding the importance and safety of immunizing.

¹ McBrayer, S.; P. Ingram, et al. (2011). San Diego County Report Card on Children and Families. San Diego, The Children's Initiative. Johnson Group Consulting.

² California Department of Public Health (rev. 05/21/2012). 2011-12 Kindergarten Assessment Results, <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize/Pages/ImmunizationRatesatCaliforniaSchools.aspx> (June 2012).