

National Infant Immunization Week/ Vaccination Week in the Americas



New Mexico Evaluation Report

2011



2011 NATIONAL INFANT IMMUNIZATION WEEK NEW MEXICO EVALUATION REPORT

The New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) Office of Border Health and its Outreach Office of the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission (NM-ORO) appreciate the support of all partners involved in the realization of National Infant Immunization Week/Vaccination Week of the Americas (NIIW) 2011.

The goal of NIIW is to promote sustainable partnerships to improve border health conditions. Intended outcomes include increased community and inter-agency networking relationships, increased information sharing and educational opportunities, and increased awareness of the commission and other state and local initiatives.

Key events in the New Mexico Border Region included:

- With support of the Paso del Norte Binational Health Council/ Maternal Child Health Committee (Jua-PasAna), local health departments, school districts, and community partners reached out to adolescent school-aged parents and explained the importance of vaccinating their young children and themselves at a “Teen Parent Immunization Awareness” Day. The activity for the Doña Ana County, New Mexico section occurred on May 9, 2011 at Hatch Valley High School in Hatch, New Mexico. A total of 21 students received the presentations intended to ensure that their children are fully and timely immunized.
- With support of the Paso del Norte Binational Health Council, Ben Archer Health Centers in Hatch received funds to work with Hatch Public Schools, New Mexico Department of Health Region 5, and the Doña Ana Community School of Nursing to carry out a door-to-door immunization event that increased immunization rates amongst adolescents, verified insurance status on all children and provided Medicaid, Immigrant Health Care and/or sliding-scale fee applications, updated immunization information on the New Mexico Statewide Immunization Information System (NM-SIIS) for all children contacted and/or vaccinated, and identified children with developmental delays and made referrals for assessments and screenings. A total of 87 children and 7 adults received a total of 179 immunizations.
- The Columbus-Luna County-Palomas Binational Health Council (COBINA) provided funding to Ben Archer Health Center in Deming to work with Luna County Healthy Start, Luna County DWI Program, and the Luna County Extension Office to implement a door-to-door immunization campaign that was carried out in two neighborhoods in Deming, NM on April 19, 2011. A second targeted immunization intervention was carried out at the Desert Sun Apartments (subsidized housing projects) in Deming on Thursday, April 21st. The goal of this activity was to increase awareness on the importance of children immunizations as well as to opportunistically immunize any children behind on their schedules. A total of 37 immunizations were provided.
- The Doña Ana County Immunization Coalition (DACIC) purchased incentives and poster boards for a t-shirt and poster decorating event for NIIW/VWA week. The Doña Ana County Head Start program donated 537 red, long sleeve t-shirts to the DACIC, which were decorated by students in Hatch and Garfield, NM. All children followed the theme “Shots Keep Us Healthy” and drew other healthy activities and foods on their t-shirts and posters. At the end of the activity, 758 students participated in the event and each child received a plastic bag containing a color-changing mood pencil and a translucent 7-inch ruler.

Organizations or Agencies participating this year:

- Ben Archer Health Centers (Hatch and Deming)
- Columbus-Luna County-Palomas Binational Health Council
- Doña Ana Community College of Nursing
- Doña Ana County Immunization Coalition (DACIC)
- Paso del Norte Binational Health Council/ Maternal Child Health Committee (JuaPasAna)
- Hatch Valley Public Schools:
 - Hatch Valley High School GRADS program
 - Garfield Elementary School
 - Hatch Valley Elementary School
 - Rio Grande Elementary School
- Luna County DWI Program
- Luna County Extension Office
- Luna County Health Council
- Luna County Healthy Start
- Luna County Local Public Health Office (NMDOH)
- New Mexico Department of Health:
 - Vaccine for Children Program (VFC)
 - Luna Co. Public Health Office
- Women, Infant & Children Office in Hatch
- Office of Border Health
- Mimbres Memorial Hospital

Events

The following events were carried out in New Mexico during 2011 NIIW:

1. Maternal and Child Health Committee Immunization Literacy Event

The Maternal and Child Health Committee (JuaPasAna) is just one of several connected to the Paso del Norte Binational Health Council. It is a tri-regional initiative of stakeholders in Ciudad Juarez, El Paso, Texas and Doña Ana County, New Mexico, and CDC that focuses on teenage pregnancy and behavioral health risks.

Brief description of the event:

Teen parents are often at risk of endangering their own health and the health of their children due to lack of knowledge or awareness of good health practices, and addressing the importance of immunizations for the young children of adolescent parents helps reinforce good health practices and outcomes for these young families. To that end, the JuaPasAna activity consisted of two educational presentations delivered by the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) Vaccine for Children (VFC) program coordinator, Debbie Hanus, RN, and JuaPasAna committee

The Maternal and Child Health Committee (JuaPasAna)



members from NMDOH staff Janet Flores (Region 5 Epidemiologist) and Katharine Perez-Lockett (BIDS Epidemiologist). Pre- and post- demographic information and knowledge surveys were given at the beginning and at the end of the event to measure the effectiveness of the presentation to the students.

Target Audience:

The group targeted teen parents enrolled at Hatch Valley High School for this NIIW activity, as they are responsible for maintaining their children's vaccine schedules, as well as their own vaccine schedules. The New Mexico Graduation, Reality and Dual-Role Skills program (GRADS), which provides parenting and life skills courses to teenage parents, was an opportune setting to reach these young people with immunization information.

Description of the successes experienced with the project:

This activity was well received by the participants at Hatch Valley High School. In fact, it went over so well that, the VFC coordinator would like to be involved with similar NIIW activities in the future – as she strongly believes it is important to reach this at-risk population with more disease prevention information.

Description of the challenges experienced with the project:

Scheduling an educational activity with the GRADS students in the Doña Ana County area was a challenge, as the response from the GRADS program director and teachers was slow, and scheduled school activities conflicted with the available April dates (during NIIW) originally identified for the presentations. Only one GRADS instructor gave a positive response and proposed a date for the JuaPasAna presentation. Initially, the activity was to consist of the GRADS students bringing their children with them to the presentation for review of their immunization cards and to provide vaccinations, if needed. The GRADS instructor indicated that all the students' infants were current on their immunizations, and that on-site vaccinations would not be necessary. Instead, it was agreed that student parents were to bring their child's, as well as their own, immunization cards, to class on the day of the presentation, for instruction on how to read these records. Parents often pass communicable diseases on to their children, and vice-versa. With better coordination and communication regarding this activity, perhaps more GRADS classes, and other adolescents who would benefit, would be able to receive this type of information.

Outcome:

One GRADS class with six (6) students in attendance received the first educational session by the VFC coordinator, who gave an oral presentation with some visuals and handed out information on immunizations, schedules, and community resources. The presentation and discussion session lasted approximately 40 minutes and was well-received, and Ms. Hanus received a flood of questions and facilitated a discussion of the teen parents regarding immunizations for the children and for themselves. A second opportunity presented itself when the GRADS instructor asked the NMDOH staff to stay to give another presentation to the Childhood Development class that was to occur later in the afternoon. Thirteen (13) additional students listened to the 30-minute presentation and participated in the discussion. 15 information packets on immunization were handed out, and 5 vaccination posters distributed. Both classes took the pre- and post-tests for evaluation of the presentation.

2. Ben Archer Health Centers Door-to-Door Immunization Campaign

The mission of Ben Archer Health Centers is to significantly improve the health status of its population through the prevention of illness, the promotion of health education, the provision of quality primary care, access to the under-served and a strong commitment to chronic disease and pain management.

Brief description of the event:

With funding from the Paso del Norte Binational Health Council, Ben Archer Health Center in Hatch and other partnering organizations implemented a door-to-door immunization campaign to increase vaccine coverage among residents in Hatch.

Target Audience:

Rural, poor farmworker communities in Northern Doña Ana County.

Description of the successes experienced with the project:

The campaign led to an important increase in immunization coverage rates in four colonia communities, especially among adolescents (a total of 179 immunizations were given).

The insurance status was verified on all children screened during the campaign. Where children were eligible but not affiliated and/or were not eligible, their parents were provided applications for Medicaid, immigrant/migrant health care, and/or sliding-scale fee applications.

Immunization records were updated in NM-SIIS for all children screened, whether they had received or did not receive vaccinations (a total of 87 children).

As part of the screening procedure, nurses looked for signs of developmental delays or congenital problems, and made referrals for follow-up assessments and screenings at Ben Archer Health Center in Hatch.

Ben Archer began piloting the door-to-door approach in Columbus, NM with the New Mexico Office of Border Health during the 2010 NIIW. Based on the success of that pilot, the northern Doña Ana County campaign is the second event of its type. The model promotes great teamwork and camaraderie among staffs of various organizations.

Another success is that the campaign was carried out without any attacks or injuries inflicted by dogs or chickens that are found in many homes.

Description of the challenges experienced with the project:

The constant blowing winds and dust complicated the use of papers, computers, and cell phone communications. The promotoras and nurses also dealt with the contact threat posed by dogs and chickens in the homes/yards.

A U.S. Border Patrol vehicle followed the team around the colonia communities all day on April 24. This caused uneasiness among community members and prompted some not to open their doors.

As many of the children are patients of Ben Archer in Hatch, an inordinate amount of time was used to call the clinic and inquire about shot records, which were not necessarily up to date in NM-SIIS.

**Ben Archer Health Centers
Door-to-Door
Immunization Campaign**



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Communication between the mobile NM-SIIS operator (using computer/Internet access and air-card) and promotoras and nurses walking in the community was difficult due to wind and dust, and poor coverage of cell phones.

There were some difficulties in identifying homes with children, which required that the teams knock on doors of every home in the community.

Outcome:

Two-hundred and thirty four (234) homes were visited during this campaign in the four the colonia communities of Hatch, Milagro, Placitas, and Salem. Nurses immunized 87 children and 7 adults, resulting in 179 immunizations. The staff also verified the immunization status for every child visited (234 homes). Updating the NM-SIIS program as they interacted with the community was a crucial activity, which was done for every child encountered. The majority of the immunizations were for those aged 6-18. Of the 87 children immunized, 68 were in this age group. There were also two referrals made to Tresco Tots and Aprendamos for possible developmental delays. Every household was provided with a goodie bag that included information on Tresco Tots, Aprendamos, Welcome Baby, Families First, and many incentives.

3. Ben Archer Health Center Door-to-Door Immunization Campaign in Deming, NM

Ben Archer Health Center Door-to-Door Immunization Campaign in Deming, NM



The mission of Ben Archer Health Centers is to significantly improve the health status of its population through the prevention of illness, the promotion of health education, the provision of quality primary care, access to the under-served and a strong commitment to chronic disease and pain management. Ben Archer organized other member organization of the Columbus-Luna County-Palomas Binational Health Council (COBINA), which is a binational organization performing cooperative actions to solve and prevent health-related issues within the shared border catchment area. The mission of the COBINA is to design, promote, and execute strategies to positively impact and improve public health in the Columbus-Luna County-Palomas region.

Brief description of the event:

The Columbus-Luna County-Palomas Binational Health Council sponsored two events during NIIW this year organized by Ben Archer in the Deming area. On April 19, 2011 Ben Archer Health Center staff led a door-to-door immunization campaign in Luna County. Ben Archer promotoras and nurses, joined by staff from the New Mexico Office of Border Health, Luna County Public Health Office (Public Health Region 5), and Mimbres Memorial Hospital, held a door-to-door immunization campaign in predominantly low-income, immigrant neighborhoods and apartment complexes in Deming, NM. The nurses reviewed shot records and provided immunizations to children (mainly infants) under the age of four years. There were also some adults who were given flu shots.

The second event was held on April 28th from 5:30 pm to 7:00pm at the



Desert Sun Apartments in Deming. Ben Archer Health Center provided an immunization event for farm labor families and residents of the subsidized housing complex. As an incentive for attending the event, children and their parents were treated to pizza and bottled water. In addition to the immunization information presentation, Promotoras from Ben Archer Health Centers also gave a presentation on pesticide safety while parents and children waited to have immunization cards checked by the nurse.

Target Audience:

The target audience for these events were the infants and children (and their parents) living in the low-income, immigrant enclave neighborhoods and apartment complexes in Deming, NM.

Description of the successes experienced with the project:

There was good participation from all the agencies involved with the planning and delivery of these events. The nurses from Ben Archer, Luna Public Health Office and Mimbres Memorial Hospital were very efficient in reviewing immunization records. The people who answered their doors were grateful for the chance to talk about their child's vaccinations or their health care needs. Some adults received flu shots that were also made available.

Description of the challenges experienced with the project:

This is a rural area, and many homes were either not occupied or abandoned. It is presumed that, due to the economic slowdown and the level of poverty in Luna County (the poorest county in the state), families had moved away in search of employment or returned to their original homelands (mostly Mexican immigrants). There were a lot of neighborhoods with no one home, and there were lots of dogs to contend with the group went from door-to-door, looking for signs of children (toys in the yard). And it was extremely windy, as it tends to be during this time of year in Southern New Mexico.

Outcome:

The door-to-door shot teams knocked on a total of 388 doors and gave 31 immunizations in the poorest of the poor neighborhoods in Deming. The Desert Sun Apartment event had 60 people in attendance – 36 children and 24 adults. In addition, immunization records were reviewed by a Ben Archer Health Center nurse and a total of six immunizations were given that evening. One report to Child Protective Services was also made when one of the shot teams found young children—who should have been in school—at risk of injury playing in the yard of their home full of filth and garbage, glass, and sharp metal objects.

4. Doña Ana County Immunization Coalition (DACIC)

DACIC is dedicated to improving immunization rates of children, adolescents, and adults through education, advocacy, and community partnerships.

Brief description of the event:

The DACIC received funds from the Paso del Norte Binational Health Council to purchase incentives for a t-shirt decorating event for NIIW. The expectation was to purchase tote bags, mood pencils, and 7-inch rulers with the funds, for a total of 300 students. In the end all students in the three elementary schools in the Hatch Valley Public School District, including Garfield Elementary, Hatch Valley Elementary and Rio Grande Intermediate Elementary, were involved in the activity, so the number of children participating grew from 300 to 758. The money was used to purchase permanent markers, poster boards, pencils, and rulers.

DACIC had received 537 red, long sleeve t-shirts as a donation from the Doña Ana County Head Start program. Because the t-shirts were all in children's size small, neon-colored poster boards were given to the older (larger) students in grades third through fifth. All children followed the theme "Shots Keep Us Healthy" and drew pictures of other healthy activities and foods on their t-shirts and posters. Once the t-shirts and posters were decorated, each participant received a goodie-bag with a color-changing mood pencil and a translucent 7-inch ruler.

Target Audience:

Elementary school children in Northern Doña Ana County.

Doña Ana County Immunization Coalition (DACIC)



Description of the successes experienced with the project:

DACIC group was fortunate to have the assistance of Kelly Garland, Hatch Valley Public Schools District Nurse, who was instrumental in gaining permission from the principals to have the event in each of the elementary schools in this small farming community.

All of the students, school staff, and coalition members felt that the "Shots Keep Us Healthy" project was a tremendous success. It was exciting to listen to the children as they discussed things that keep them healthy, and then to watch as they transferred their thoughts into images on t-shirts and posters.

DACIC had never worked in the rural Hatch Valley community before, but through this activity we have forged a new community partnership. The principals and teachers appreciated our efforts and have invited the group back for future events.



Description of the challenges experienced with the project:

The biggest challenge was to have enough supplies for each child. The group economized by using leftover plastic bags from the Border Binational Health Week event last October. DACIC also decided not to send home flyers (announcing the activity in advance) with the students, which saved paper and printing costs. Another challenge would have been stuffing incentives into 760 bags for the participants, but the DACIC members rallied and filled the bags during the April coalition meeting.



Outcome:

A total of 758 students were educated on the risks of communicable diseases and the need to be immunized. However, each child agreed that "shots" are important and the DACIC feels very strongly that, not only will the participants remember the message for a long time, but children will speak with their parents and remind them to keep them and their children up to date on immunizations.

If DACIC had additional funds, they would have purchased more incentives for the 758 participants, as most of them come from poor farm worker families. The children loved the pencils and rulers and would have benefited from additional school supplies.

Summary:

This year many events took place in Southern New Mexico during NIIW/VWA, April 23-30, 2011. The NM Outreach Office encouraged very participatory events involving many healthcare services providers. The effort included immunization literacy outreach to teen parents, adults, and even young children themselves. The door-to-door immunization approach has now been carried out in three separate events during NIIW in Luna and Doña Ana Counties and vetted as a model, and will be used annually to increase immunizations in poor, rural and immigrant neighborhoods. The door-to-door campaigns netted a total of 216 immunizations provided to a total of 124 children and 7 adults. The GRADS immunization literacy outreach represents a new and innovative way to build knowledge among adolescents (and especially adolescent parents) about the importance of immunizations. Similarly, the activities with 758 elementary students at three school sites in the Hatch Valley Public School District should make the children themselves more knowledgeable and responsible in keeping current on immunizations and interacting with their parents to ensure that they are.