Harnessing the Power of Stakeholder Engagement to Advance Immunization Policy in Texas

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COLLABORATORS

- The Honorable Charlie Howard
- The Honorable Wendy Davis
- The Honorable Jane Nelson
- The Honorable Ken Seliger
- Texas Association of Community Colleges
- Texas Association of Family Physicians
- Texas Children’s Hospital
- Texas Department of State Health Services
- Texas Education Association
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Texas Medical Association
- Texas Pediatric Society
- Texas Public Health Coalition
- The J.A.M.I.E. Group
- The Williams Family
- The Schanbaum Family
- Austin Community College
- Baylor University
- Houston Community College
- Kilgore College
- Midland College
- Navarro College
- St. Edwards University
- St. Mary’s University
- Texas A&M University
- Texas Wesleyan University
- Trinity University
- University of Mary-Hardin Baylor
- University of Texas Dallas
- University of Texas San Antonio
- University of Texas Pan America
- And many others…
OBJECTIVES

1. Identify strategies for empowering stakeholders through collaboration, knowledge sharing, and opportunities to participate in the policy and planning processes.

2. Understand how survey data can validate and enhance advocacy goals.

3. Highlight opportunities to engage stakeholders as advocacy champions.
BACKGROUND

• Meningococcal meningitis:
  – Kills 1 in 10 individuals
  – 717 cases in Texas over the last ten years
  – Young adults aged 16-21 are at high risk of disease
  – Immunization recommended at 11-12 and 16 years old
  – 74% of teens were vaccinated (MCV4) in 2012

Texas Department of State Health Services, “Meningococcal Invasive Disease Data”
http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/IDCU/disease/meningococcal_invasive/Meningococcal-Invasive-Disease-Data.doc

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Teen Vaccination Coverage, 2012 National Immunization Survey (NIS) - Teen”
http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/vaccination-coverage.html
VIDEO

VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASE
The Forgotten Story

Texas Children's Hospital - "Facing Meningitis"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2-U1S74OH0
BACKGROUND

Legislation to protect college students in Texas

2009
- Jamie Schanbaum Act required college students living in dorms to show proof of vaccination within last 5 years

2011
- Jamie Schanbaum and Nicolis Williams Act expanded to include all students up to 30 years

2013
- Law revised to align with CDC; students up to 22 years
BACKGROUND

• Implementation Challenges in 2011-2012
  – Large proportion of students affected (age range)
  – Multiple exemption processes
  – Availability & cost of vaccine
  – Varied levels of preparation among college admin.
  – Transfer students and enrollment at multiple schools
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

• Strategies:

1. Regular conference calls with implementation partners
2. Statewide meetings
3. Statewide online survey
4. Stakeholder publication
5. Mobilizing champions and stakeholders
STRATEGY 1: CONFERENCE CALLS

• Collect stakeholder feedback
• Create sounding board for implementation concerns
• Connect stakeholders with key representatives
  – Department of State Health Services, Higher Education Coordinating Board, legislative offices, etc.
STRATEGY 2: STATEWIDE MEETINGS

- 2012: 170 participants in 4 cities
- Goals:
  - Learn about and discuss immunization topics
  - Share advocacy strategies and techniques
- Outcomes demonstrate success in engaging stakeholders
STRATEGY 3: STATEWIDE SURVEY

• Used SurveyMonkey
• Distributed to 1,800 stakeholders
• Utilized health and immunization networks to maximize response
  – 46 towns and cities
  – Parents, providers, state agency personnel, hospitals, non-profits, and more
STRATEGY 3: STATEWIDE SURVEY

Figure 20. Extent to Which the Following Issues Make It More Challenging for College Students to Get their Meningococcal Vaccination, 2012

- Availability of information and marketing materials for college students: 13% Not at all, 28% A little, 27% Somewhat, 33% A great deal
- Providers aren’t stocking the vaccine for reasons other than cost: 15% Not at all, 16% A little, 33% Somewhat, 36% A great deal
- College administrators are ill-prepared to deal with new law: 8% Not at all, 9% A little, 42% Somewhat, 42% A great deal
- Inaccessibility to immunization providers among college students: 3% Not at all, 14% A little, 27% Somewhat, 56% A great deal
- Cost of vaccine for providers: 2% Not at all, 11% A little, 19% Somewhat, 68% A great deal
- Cuts to the Adult Safety Net program: 2% Not at all, 1% A little, 14% Somewhat, 83% A great deal
- Cost of vaccine for college students: 2% Not at all, 10% A little, 88% A great deal

Percentages are rounded.

STRATEGY 3: STATEWIDE SURVEY

Figure 21. If proposed that the age range for meningococcal vaccination be decreased so that college students through age 21 are required to get immunized, how likely would you be to support this proposal?

- Not at all: 33%
- A little: 12%
- Somewhat: 16%
- A great deal: 39%

STRATEGY 3: STATEWIDE SURVEY

“We received calls from administrators of local colleges, asking for help to provide the vaccine to their students. It was extremely frustrating to have to tell them we couldn’t help”
- Director, public health department, Houston

“Cuts to the Adult Safety Net program, specifically to meningococcal vaccine, were a disaster especially in light of the new college mandate. DSHS cuts will now expect low income, under-insured adults to reach deep in their finances to get the vaccine - it’s a shame Texas did this and put their citizens at risk.”
- Stakeholder, Austin

STRATEGY 4: PUBLICATIONS

Available online at www.immunizeUSA.org/education
STRATEGY 5: MOBILIZING CHAMPIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS

• Key stakeholders engaged as advocacy champions
• Shared testimony and stories in support of legislation
• Reinforced need for meningitis requirement and examples of successful implementation
• Calls to action through network
CHAMPION SPOTLIGHT: GREG WILLIAMS

- Powerful personal story
- Established relationships with critical policy makers
- Testified before state legislature
- Engaged with media, including interviews and op-eds
- “On call” for other advocacy needs

Image: Texas State University news release: http://www.tsu.edu/About/Administration/University_Advancement/Communications/News_Reel/TS%20EmployeesLeadMeningitusCampaign.php
OUTCOMES

Engagement with diverse stakeholders

Opportunities for stakeholders to engage on the issue

Partnerships with stakeholders

Broad statewide support for law

Feedback informed our legislative priorities

Mobilize champions for action
NEXT STEPS

• Continued efforts:
  – Monitor implementation of law
  – Ongoing communication with stakeholders

• Possible legislative actions:
  – Support access to vaccine through safety net
  – Explore rulemaking that requires teens to receive booster
  – Explore documentation options (e.g. transcripts) to ease proof of vaccination
CONTACT INFORMATION

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