ADDRESSING VACCINE-HESITANCY IN WASHINGTON’S RUSSIAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITIES
Why Russian-Speakers?

This “hidden” population has the lowest rates of childhood immunization of any language group in Washington, according to HEDIS data.

Why a Community Forum?

Participants in four focus groups in three geographic regions independently requested a forum where they could discuss their questions with an expert. A community meeting provides transparency without the pressure to make a decision in the moment or the time limitations and language barriers of a doctor’s appointment.
Some concerns were similar:
• Popular media, misinformation online, and families and friends are influential
• Children shouldn’t be immunized if sick
• Vaccines harm children’s immune system

Some concerns were unique:
• Language barrier and lack of trust make it harder to get questions answered by providers
• Different immunization schedules in countries of origin
• Issues with availability and quality of vaccines in countries of origin
Prepare
- Research – literature, informants
- Develop relationships with community partners
- Create materials

Meet
- Provided incentive, food, and childcare
- 20 parents attended

Evaluate
- Russian-speaking team member took notes
- Surveys were completed, then translated
• Diseases that vaccines prevent
• How vaccines work
• How safety and quality are ensured
• Why young infants are immunized
• Vaccine ingredients

• How vaccines affect the immune system
• Combination vaccines and multiple doses
• Herd/community immunity
• Personal experiences!
40% Of parents changed their opinion as a result of the meeting
60% Of parents are more comfortable with a Russian-speaking healthcare provider.
55% Of parents preferred a community meeting over speaking 1-on-1 with their provider
What did we learn?

• Involve Russian-speakers in every step!

• Moderation is key to a successful discussion

• Community partnerships drive attendance

• Incentives and meals are nice but not necessary to offer if budget is low

• Think about the meeting as part of a relationship-building process
What Now?

Next Steps
Other Communities
Use data to identify a problem

Ask communities

Develop and try an intervention

Continue to improve
What can we provide?

**Toolkit**

Technical Assistance

- Toolkit includes background history and literature review
- Practical handbook including step-by-step how-to and tools such as sample agenda and menu
- Editable documents such as powerpoint and evaluation survey