Rapid Response Public Health Advocacy: Indiana’s HPV Letter

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• The letter
• The response
• The response to the response
• Take homz
• Increases pediatric and adolescent vaccination completion (private practices, school health clinics)

• Cost effective

Indiana HPV Reminder/Recall Letters & HPV vaccination completion (>2)
Recent Indiana HPV Policy & Vax Completion Time Line

- **3rd HPV dose reminder letter**: 2012
- **2nd & 3rd HPV dose reminder letter**: 2013
- **Feb**: Failed to set 80% HPV vax goal (HB 1359)
- **Sept**: Reminder letters begin to non-initiating HPV vax households
- **October 23-November 6**: Advocacy Activity

Graph showing % Girls > 2 HPV vax doses and % Boys > 2 HPV vax doses over time from 2012 to 2016.
Advocacy Coalition Activity
October 23 - November 6, 2015

Email campaign & media advocacy from American Family Association of Indiana

Governor: “Will look into it”

Center for HPV Research letter to Gov Pence

Health organization’s send letter to Gov Pence

State changes HPV letter language

Media advocacy from HPV vax supporters (research, health, political)
- Rapid, coordinated response to re-engage the advocacy coalition
- Broad – researchers & human service agencies
- Social media initiated, press picked up
• Engaged the Network: Relationships were already in place, and communications started immediately.

• Leaders stepped forward to engage their partners and organizations

• Organizations quickly drafted letters and vetted through their organizations

• Posted copy of letter(s) on Social Media
Human Service Orgs
• IN Imms Coalition
• IN Family Health Council
• Minority Health Coalitions
• Little Red Door
• Kristen Forbes EVE Foundation
• American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
• Community Wellness Partners

Research Orgs
• Center for HPV Research (IU, Purdue, Notre Dame)
• IU Simon Cancer Center
• IU School of Medicine
• IU Kelley School of Business
• Purdue College of Pharmacy
• IU Schools of Public Health
• Rural Center for AIDS/STD Prevention

Just how broad was it?
Governor Pence Chooses Ideology over Recommendation

Public Health Experts Critical Of Indiana's New HPV Vaccination Reminder

INDIANAPOLIS -- An outspoken critic of the state's vaccination reminder letter seems to have misunderstood the language of the letter, indicating that there is no requirement to actually read the letter. Panelists at an event this week discussed the potential health implications of failing to vaccinate children for HPV, and urged parents to prioritize the health of their children.

What Does The HPV Letter Controversy Mean For Public Health?

A letter recently stirred up a controversy by encouraging parents to vaccinate their kids against the human papillomavirus, or HPV. The letter's language has been criticized by public health experts, who argue that it does not require anyone to actually read the letter. The controversy highlights the importance of clear communication in public health campaigns.

Indiana Health Community Petitions Pence On HPV Vaccine

A group of public health advocates has petitioned Governor Pence to reconsider the state's vaccination policy. They argue that the new letter does not adequately communicate the importance of vaccinating children against HPV, and that it may lead to confusion among parents.

Mike Pence ignored advice by 30 medical professionals and turned bunked to conservatives over HPV vaccination letter.

Governor Mike Pence's ideology has got the best of him again, but this time, our Hoosier chief is embarking on a new health policy that's going to cost our state millions. He's on his way to a new state of affairs. Indiana's health problems facing our state. However, because he's so worried about his appeal to Hoosiers - he's willing to ignore recommendations from over 30 doctors.

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New Letter, New Messages

• Inform about HPV, cancer, and vaccines to prevent it
• HPV causes cancers in men and women; very common STD
• Vax is best prevention
• Vax is safe and highly effective
• Continue HPV screening

• ISDH routinely reminds about vax completion
• Your child has not started HPV vax
• You can opt out of registry; how.
• HPV most common STD, but will likely go away
• Sometimes causes cancer
• Vax is recommended
Was this a win or a lose?

Both

- Increased public awareness about HPV vaccine because of controversy (win)
- Letter language improved and degraded (meh)
- Strengthened advocacy coalition (win)
- Ideology trumped public health (again)….lose
• Anyone can “do” advocacy
• Advocacy is as much about educating our communities as it is about educating policy makers
• Timing is everything
• Relationships help… A LOT
• We won’t always win, but we build capacity for the ‘next round’