Implementation of Michigan’s College and University Flu Vaccination Challenge to Raise Young Adult Flu Immunization Rates

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In Michigan and nationally, influenza immunization rates remain lowest among adults aged 18-49 years.
Background

- 2013-2014 flu season particularly severe among young adults
  - Predominantly influenza A(H1N1), first season since 2009 pandemic
Severe flu in young healthy people prompts U-M Health System to issue vaccine reminder and restrict visitors

Over a dozen flu patients now in U-M ICUs, with many others hospitalized

MDCH Concerned about Severe Flu Activity: Urges Individuals to Get Vaccinated

Contact: Angela Minicuci 517-241-2112

For Immediate Release: January 8, 2014

Detroit Free Press

Health officials warn college students to be wary of H1N1 flu strain

Three people in their 20s die from flu outbreak in Oakland County

Rochester Hills mom speaks out about daughter, 23, who died from flu

The Michigan Daily

Hesitant to get vaccine, youth still vulnerable

Press Release

CDC Reports Flu Hit Younger People Particularly Hard This Season
Background

- Several young adults in Michigan died from flu during 2013-2014 season
- Conversations with community partners demonstrated college health centers could improve vaccination efforts, change focus from treatment to prevention
- Needed targeted initiative to increase flu immunization rates among young adults

Why get a flu vaccine?

Ask the McCormick family of Michigan.

Even healthy, young adults can get the flu, and it can be very serious. This year and every year, get vaccinated against the flu. It could save a life.

Ashley’s story

Ashley McCormick was a 23-year-old nanny. She came home from work on December 20, 2013, with a runny nose, sore throat, and headache. The next day she had a high fever and went to urgent care. Her positive flu result came too late for Ashley to be treated. She started to feel better, but on Christmas her fever was 103.8 degrees. The next day she went to the emergency room with pneumonia. Ashley had H1N1 flu and quickly became very sick. On December 27, Ashley died from the flu. Ashley’s life may have been saved if she had been vaccinated.

www.aimtoolkit.org
www.theshelleyeccormickflufoundation.com

Concept adapted with permission from Texas Children’s Hospital.
The Idea

- American Red Cross Blood Battle
  - Friendly competition between rival schools was enough to get students to participate, even if giving blood wasn’t routine health behavior

Ohio State vs. Michigan Blood Battle since 1982

Are you a Buckeye or a Wolverine?

Whether you bleed scarlet and gray or maize and blue, you can show your colors by donating blood during the annual Ohio State-Michigan Blood Battle with the American Red Cross each November.

Since 1982 students and fans of the two schools have battled to take top honors in giving blood. The Blood Battle has grown into one of the largest blood competitions in the country with more than 2,500 donations given on each campus alone.

www.redcross.org, University of Michigan: www.bloodbattle.org
Background and Pilot Year

- **GOAL**: To increase flu immunization rates among college-aged young adults in Michigan
- **2013-2014 Flu Season**
  - Focused on education, partnership building with college/university health centers
  - Created and distributed flu vaccination toolkit targeting this demographic
- **Spring 2014**
  - Brainstormed
  - Held planning webinar with schools to gauge interest
  - Reached out to pharmaceutical representatives for collaboration/assistance
  - Shared concept with immunization partners (e.g. local health departments, Flu Advisory Board)
  - Designed enrollment form for schools (target: health centers), opened enrollment
Implementation Timeline 2014-2015

- Summer 2014
  - Held 2 webinars with schools: partnership building and best practices (champions: Vanderbilt University, University of Minnesota)
  - Updated college/university flu vaccination toolkit
  - Distributed joint letters to schools’ medical, nursing, pharmacy, and public health schools, residence halls, and communications offices
  - Connected schools with key partners (e.g. local health departments)
- September 2014 – kicked off Challenge with press release

**MDCH Kicks Off New Flu Vaccination Challenge for College-Age Adults**

Contact: Angela Minicuci (517) 241-2112

For Immediate Release: September 4, 2014

LANING, Mich. — The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) is partnering with colleges and universities, as well as community partners, across the state to increase flu vaccinations among young adults. Each year, several healthy, young adults in Michigan die from the flu. Influenza vaccination is the single best way to prevent influenza infection.

According to data from the Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR), only 10.1 percent of individuals aged 18-24 years were vaccinated against flu during the 2013-14 flu season. College students have unique risk factors that make them more susceptible to getting sick, such as close contact in dormitories and classrooms.
Collaboration: bioCSL, KYNE, Families Fighting Flu, Alana’s Foundation

Amplify flu educational efforts through partner collaboration using communications/marketing, community engagement, grassroots outreach, social media engagement and media outreach.
## Collaboration: bioCSL, KYNE, Families Fighting Flu, Alana’s Foundation

<table>
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<th>Partner</th>
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| **MDCH** | • Drive public health goal among partner colleges and with clinics  
• Measure and assess  
• Provide public health spokespeople  
• Provide final approval on all materials as public health authority |
| **Families Fighting Flu and Alana’s Foundation** | • Provide expertise and guidance regarding flu advocacy  
• Activate advocates in Michigan and nationally  
• Serve as media spokespeople, identify additional spokespeople  
• Provide materials for adaptation |
| **Michigan Colleges and Universities** | • Help MDCH navigate infrastructure at schools  
• Identify channels for reaching students  
• Roll out communications tools  
• Help identify community partners for vaccinations (if needed) |
| **bioCSL** | • Conduct social media listening to generate audience insights  
• Support partners in the development and roll out of communications campaign, including toolkits for college partners |
2014-2015 Flu Challenge Specifics

- Created student self-report survey
  - Self-report currently gold standard in national immunization surveys
  - Asked students’ school, age in years, and month of flu vaccination
- Used self-report survey data and schools’ undergraduate student population to determine flu coverage (%), overall winners
  - Divided schools into Small (<10,000 undergraduates), Medium (10,000-25,000), and Large (25,000+) for fair competition
- Main Challenge with winners based on self-reported survey data ran September 2014 – December 2014
- Analyzed schools’ Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR) data for July 2014 – March 2015
- January 2015 – March 2015: best “late season” vaccination initiative
2014-2015 Flu Challenge Specifics

- 14 schools enrolled in 2014-2015 from 11 counties
  - 7 Small: Albion College, Aquinas College, Calvin College, Hope College, Kalamazoo College, Northwestern MI College, Southwestern MI College
  - 5 Medium: Central MI University, Eastern MI University, Grand Valley State University, Oakland University, Wayne State University
  - 2 Large: Michigan State University, University of Michigan

- Enrolled schools had total 184,148 undergraduate students
- Leader updates sent biweekly to enrolled schools
- Total 7 webinars with schools from planning to evaluation, 3 newsletters
Outcomes from Collaboration: bioCSL, KYNE, Families Fighting Flu, Alana’s Foundation

I'm doing it for my sister. Take the challenge today.

I lost my sister to the flu. Alana was healthy one day, and gone the next!

No one is invincible against this dangerous disease, but we can protect ourselves and avoid spreading the flu to our friends and families by getting vaccinated. Take the Michigan Department of Community Health’s Flu Vaccination Challenge and see how your school stacks up to other Michigan campuses.

Visit your campus health center or find a clinic at flushot.healthmap.org, and join the challenge at www.surveymonkey.com/s/flubattle

Mom Knows Best PSA

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltb4RfTrmlc
Alana’s Foundation

- Ongoing partnership with MDHHS since brainstorming Challenge concept
- Provided vaccine assistance grants
  - 3 schools in 2014-2015
  - 6 schools in 2015-2016
- Purchased and sponsor 3 traveling trophies
- Ongoing support and collaboration with all enrolled schools
  - Consulting and brainstorming with students and program organizers on ways to market Challenge to students
- Attend on-site clinics, share Alana’s story, brochures, and encourage vaccination to potential recipients

www.alanasfoundation.org
2014-2015 Flu Challenge Results

- Announced winners during National Influenza Vaccination Week 2014
- Overall winners:
  - Small: Hope College
  - Medium: Wayne State University
  - Large: Michigan State University

MDCH Announces Flu Vaccination Challenge Winners, Reminds Residents to Immunize

Contact: Jennifer Smith 517-241-2112
For Immediate Release: December 8, 2014

LANSING, Mich. – This year, in an effort to raise vaccination rates among young adults, Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) partnered with 14 colleges and universities in the first annual Flu Vaccination Challenge to see which school could get the highest flu vaccination rate on their campus. Today, as part of the National Influenza Vaccination Week, MDCH announced that Hope College, Wayne State University, and Michigan State University are the winners of the 2014-2015 Flu Vaccination Challenge.

“Vaccination is the single best way to prevent against getting the flu,” said Nick Lyon, director of the MDCH. “I congratulate the winners of this year’s Flu Vaccination Challenge, and applaud all of the colleges and universities that partnered with us to raise awareness and vaccination rates on their campuses.”

The announcement comes as influenza activity is increasing in the state, especially in Michigan’s Southeast region. MDCH is urging residents not to wait to get their flu vaccine this year.

“Vaccine-preventable diseases like the flu are a very real threat in our communities,” said Dr. Matthew Davis, chief medical executive with the MDCH. “It takes about two weeks after vaccination to be protected against the flu, and I encourage all residents to get vaccinated now so they are protected before flu becomes widespread in Michigan.”

Hope College wins MDCH’s Flu Vaccination Challenge

The Michigan Department of Community Health recently announced Hope College as a winner of the 2014-2015 Flu Vaccination Challenge, a competition between 14 colleges and universities intended to raise vaccination rates among young adults.

Wayne State University and Michigan State University also won their respective categories, which were based on school size. The first annual event determined which school could get the highest flu vaccination rate on their campus, and winner announcements coincided with National Influenza Vaccination Week.
2014-2015 Flu Challenge Results

Left to right: Bob Swanson (MDHHS), Christie Bellak (Wayne State University), Jennifer Strohmeyer (Michigan State University), Cindy Sabo (Hope College), JoAnna Yaksich (Alana’s Foundation), Zachary Yaksich (Alana’s Foundation)
2014-2015 Flu Challenge Results

This certificate entitles two members of your health center to free registration for the

2015 Michigan Regional Immunization Conferences

In order to receive your free registration you must complete BOTH of these steps:

1) Register for the conference online at http://register2015.mihealth.org/. Registration starts September 10, 2015. We encourage you to register promptly. This certificate does not guarantee a registration if the conference is full.

2) Please email this completed certificate to lockwoodc@michigan.gov with Free College Registration in the subject line or fax this completed certificate to 517-335-9855. Attn: Carlene Lockwood. Once your certificate is accepted, a confirmation email will be sent to each registrant.

Name of First Attendee: ____________________________________________

Name of Second Attendee: ____________________________________________

College/University: _________________________________________________

This free registration is the result of winning the 2014-15 MDHHS College and University Flu Vaccination Challenge for your college/university’s size category. Thank you for participating in the Flu Challenge and for all your hard work immunizing your students against the flu!
2014-2015 Flu Challenge Results

- Months of self-reported flu vaccination:

![Graph showing flu vaccination by month:]

- August: 0
- September: 1,000
- October: 3,500 (55%)
- November: 800
- December: 100
2014-2015 Flu Challenge Results

- MCIR data: 12,953 flu vaccines documented in registry by the 14 enrolled health centers July 1 – December 31, 2014
  - A 60% increase from 8,098 doses July 2013 – December 2013

- In total, 13,914 flu vaccines documented in registry by the 14 enrolled health centers July 1, 2014 – March 31, 2015
  - A 33% increase from 10,468 doses July 2013 – March 2014
2014-2015 Flu Challenge Results

- MCIR winners (most doses in MCIR July 2014 – March 2015)
  - Small: Calvin College
  - Medium: Wayne State University
  - Large: University of Michigan

- “Late season” MCIR winner (most doses January 2015 – March 2015)
  - University of Michigan

- Most improved in MCIR from 2013-2014 (pre-challenge) to 2014-2015 (pilot year)
  - Central Michigan University with more than 13,000% increase in flu doses

- Innovative Champion award
  - Wayne State University
Changes from 2014-2015 to 2015-2016

- Based on evaluations from schools enrolled in 2014-2015
  - Challenge aspects schools liked, disliked, areas for improvement
- Majority of schools promoted Flu Challenge through email blasts to students, social media, and on-campus events
- Majority of schools did NOT partner with their local health departments, pharmacies, or other community vaccinators to get students vaccinated
Changes from 2014-2015 to 2015-2016

- No external collaboration with bioCSL → no budget
- Decided to extend the overall Challenge through March 2016
- Decided to keep student self-report survey rather than use MCIR to determine schools’ flu coverage
  - Self-report allows students who got vaccinated somewhere other than student health center to be counted, MCIR limits to those vaccinated at health center
  - Added “place of vaccination” to self-report survey
2015-2016 Self-Report Survey

2015-16 College Flu Challenge Student Survey

1. School Name

2. Yes, I got my flu vaccine in:

3. Where did you get your flu vaccine this season?

4. How many years old are you?

Done
2015-2016 Flu Challenge Specifics

- 17 schools enrolled in 2015-2016 from 12 counties
  - 9 Small: Albion College, Alma College, Aquinas College, Calvin College, Hope College, Kalamazoo College, Muskegon Community College, Rochester College, Southwestern MI College
  - 6 Medium: Eastern MI University, Ferris State University, Grand Valley State University, Oakland University, Wayne State University, Western MI University
  - 2 Large: Michigan State University, University of Michigan
- Enrolled schools 198,813 undergraduate students
- Leader updates monthly on social media, sent to schools monthly through December 2015 then weekly January – March 2016
- Total 5 webinars with schools, 3 newsletters
2015-2016 Flu Challenge Results

- Announced winners via press release, social media in April 2016
- Overall winners:
  - Small: Calvin College
  - Medium: Wayne State University
  - Large: Michigan State University

MDHHS announces winners of 2016 College Flu Vaccination Challenge, reminds residents to get immunized

Contact: Jennifer Eisner 517-241-2112

For Immediate Release: April 20, 2016

LANSING, Mich. – In an effort to raise influenza vaccination rates among young adults, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) partnered with Alana’s Foundation and 17 Michigan colleges and universities in the second annual Flu Vaccination Challenge. The Challenge was first implemented in the 2014-2015 flu season as a friendly competition to see which schools could achieve the highest flu vaccination rates on their campuses.

Today, MDHHS announced that Calvin College, Wayne State University, and Michigan State University are the winners of the 2015-2016 Flu Vaccination Challenge for small, medium, and large-sized schools, respectively. This represents the first win for Calvin College and back-to-back wins from 2014-2015 for Wayne State University and Michigan State University.

"Vaccination is the single best way to prevent the flu," said Nick Lyon, director of MDHHS. "I congratulate the winners of this year’s Flu Vaccination Challenge and applaud all of the colleges and universities that partnered with us to raise awareness and vaccination rates on their campuses."
2015-2016 Flu Challenge Results

*Left to right:* Karen Huyghe (Wayne State University), JoAnna Yaksich (Alana’s Foundation), Jennifer Strohmeyer (Michigan State University), Elizabeth Baty (Michigan State University)
2015-2016 Flu Challenge Results

- 8,814 self-reported surveys completed Aug. 26 – Dec. 7, 2015
  - Compared to 5,717 during 2014-2015 Flu Challenge, increase of 54%
- Months of self-reported flu vaccination:

![Bar chart showing flu vaccination by month from August 2014 to March 2016, comparing 2014 (ended 12/7/14) to 2015-16.]
2015-2016 Flu Challenge Results

Self-reported Flu Vaccines by Location Administered, 2015-2016

3,776 non-college (35%)
2015-2016 Flu Challenge Results

- MCIR data: 13,228 flu vaccines documented in registry by the 17 enrolled health centers July 1, 2015 – March 31, 2016
  - Similar to 13,914 doses July 2014 – March 2015
- MCIR winners (most doses in MCIR July 2015 – March 2016)
  - Small: Calvin College
  - Medium: Wayne State University
  - Large: University of Michigan
2015-2016 Flu Challenge Results

- “Late season” MCIR winner (most doses January 2016 – March 2016)
  - University of Michigan
- Most improved in MCIR from 2014-2015 (pilot year) to 2015-2016 (2nd year)
  - Oakland University, with 34% increase in flu doses
- Innovative Champion award
  - Wayne State University
Lessons Learned

- Need buy-in from health department leadership
  - Chief Medical Executive, Public Information Officer & Communications team
- Collaboration and partnerships are key
  - Advocacy groups, pharmaceuticals
- Need immunization champions at colleges/health centers
- Most health centers seem to take on burden of immunizing their students themselves, do not take advantage of immunization neighborhood
- Peer-to-peer important for targeting this age group
- Despite all the above, barriers for immunizing this age group persist
Acknowledgments

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Questions?

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517-335-3385 (through June 10), 517-284-4877 (as of June 13)

Flu Challenge Webpage: www.michigan.gov/flu →
“College & University Flu Vaccination Challenge”