

# Community Success Story: Improving HPV Vaccination Rates, Year 1

## District Health Department #10

### Summary

The goal of this project is to increase HPV vaccine compliance among youth and young adults in District Health Department #10 (DHD#10) by 20%. DHD#10 planned a multi-component outreach campaign to reduce missed opportunities for HPV vaccination, increase access to HPV vaccination, and build youth and parent support for HPV vaccination.

A key component of this campaign is a Photovoice project that will use student input and photography to illustrate the importance of completing the HPV vaccine series, identify barriers to compliance, and inform community members about HPV.

By bringing the issue of HPV vaccine compliance to the forefront of the agency's focus, there was an increase of HPV vaccine compliance reported in most age groups in the first year of this two year project. Vaccine compliance rates increased despite the numerous setbacks that the project experienced in Year 1. With a strong foundation for success slated in Year 1, Year 2 will be successful and yield a further increase of HPV vaccine compliance in all age groups.

### Challenges

District Health Department #10's HPV vaccination series completion rate for females age 13 to 17 years old at the start of this project was 32%, which was above the Michigan rate of 23% but below the Healthy People 2020 target of 80%. And, only 7% of males age 13 to 17 years old completed the 3-dose HPV vaccination series.

The first year of this project experienced some setbacks. The setback that has caused the largest impact and delay to the project came from the original partnership with a group that was an important component to the PhotoVoice and marketing piece of the project. Unfortunately, that group was unable to participate as was originally proposed.

District Health Department #10 experienced some internal barriers within our infrastructure, as well. The agency experienced a large staffing change, which resulted in a delay to begin this project. The setbacks, although detrimental to the first year of the project, are manageable and measures have been put into place to overcome all barriers and ensure a successful second year.

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## Solutions

District Health Department #10 is committed to achieving the original goals and objectives set forth through this project and has put measures in place to assure that the second year is successful. The agency has entered into a new partnership with The Oceana Prevention Partnership for Change (TOPPC) youth board to investigate the benefits and barriers to obtaining the HPV vaccine through the PhotoVoice project. This new partnership is exciting because the youth board has participated in a PhotoVoice project before and has been involved in community education regarding sexual health, which reduces the risk for lack of participation due to the sensitivity of the topic. The internal barriers regarding staffing and assigned roles have been overcome through clearly defined roles and leadership assignment that will assure all components are completed.

## Results

The successes that have come from this project include increased awareness of the HPV vaccine within District Health Department #10, new partnerships, projects that are planned or already implemented that were inspired by this project, and the action steps taken to overcome current and future barriers for this project. The greatest success is that all departments within the agency are now more aware of the need to increase HPV vaccine compliance and are offering ideas and solutions to achieve this goal.

At this point in the project, most of the success has come from District Health Department #10's renewed philosophy of "no missed opportunities." This philosophy recognized the need for one person to initiate immunization recalls (including HPV) for all adolescents residing in the district – shifting the burden from nurses and clerical staff to one person, which has increased our recalls in all 10 counties. Additionally, this grant has increased the conversation surrounding the district's HPV vaccine compliance rates and has increased effort among all departments to improve vaccination rates.

## Look Ahead

District Health Department #10 has confidence as we enter into the second year of our project that all goals and objectives will be met and an environment for sustained progress will be established.

