

The 2010 Community Health Project: Immunization Awareness

The NCANS Community Health Committee proposes that NCANS adopt Immunization Awareness as the Community Health Project for 2010-2011. The American Nurses Association has created this project in an effort to support the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, which was enacted through the Healthcare Reform. One of the focuses of this new law is to provide for the growth of access and exposure to vaccines. The ANA believes that as professionals, nurses are obligated to be immunized for the protection of both themselves and for their patients.

History:

A vaccination works in the body by “tricking” the immune system into producing antibodies to fight a form of the specific virus that is not harmful. If the patient is ever exposed to the dangerous form of the virus, the body will be prepared to fight against it without damaging any cells.

The concept of immunization awareness was greatly increased in 1796 when Dr. Edward Jenner discovered that inoculation with cowpox gave immunity to smallpox, the major cause of death in the 18th century. Inoculation refers to the placement of an antigenic substance into the body to produce or boost the body’s immunity to a specific disease. This process is said to have originated in India in the 8th century and came to be called “vaccination” after “vacca,” the Latin word for cow.

It is very important that all communities are aware and up-to-date on all routine vaccinations to maintain good health, but nurses are exposed to many communicable diseases and are in contact with patients that could pose as a higher risk to transferring these disease. This is why it is so important for nurses to be the main advocates for immunization awareness. As a nurse, it is especially important to have seasonal influenza (every fall), measles, mumps, rubella, Hepatitis B, Varicella, and Tetanus vaccinations.

What’s being done?



The American Nurses Association (ANA) launched a campaign entitled “ANA Immunize: Bringing Immunity to Every Community” as an effort to assist the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in promoting immunizations among every community, especially nurses. Nurses play a crucial role in promoting immunizations with hopes for America to have a fully-vaccinated population. With vaccinations, nurses protect themselves, their families, and their patients. This campaign’s main goals are to increase the knowledge and competency in immunizations among nurses, ensuring that nurses are taking advantage of every vaccination opportunity, and to make nurses the main role in promoting immunization to the public.



The Department of Immunization, Vaccines and Biologicals is a section of the WHO that focuses on creating and maintaining “a world in which all people at risk are protected against vaccine-preventable diseases”. In 1999, the Director-General of the WHO established the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) to provide an advisory group for vaccines and immunizations. Also, the WHO, in correspondence with UNICEF, has generated the Global Immunization Vision and Strategy (GIVS). This program’s goal is to assist countries to immunize a greater number of people with a larger range of vaccines. GIVS serves as the first global ten-year program to battle vaccine-preventable diseases using immunization.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recognized August as National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM). August is an opportune time to remind family, friends, co-workers, and those in the community to catch up on their vaccinations. Parents are enrolling their children in school, students are entering college, and healthcare workers are preparing for the upcoming flu season. This organizations goal is the prevention of disease, disability, and death by increasing awareness about immunizations across the life span, from infants to the elderly.



The **National Foundation for Infectious Diseases** (NFID) is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization founded in 1973 and dedicated to encouraging and sponsoring public and professional education about infectious diseases.

NFID carries out its mission by:

- Educating the public
- Educating healthcare professionals
- Supporting research and training in infectious diseases
- Building coalitions
- Honoring scientific and public health achievement, legislative contributions, and philanthropy in infectious diseases research

What can you do?



The North Carolina Nurses Association believes that “it is the responsibility of the registered nurse to obtain and comply with appropriate immunizations and screening.”

What Vaccines do YOU need?

Immunization is not for infants and children only, certain vaccines are recommended for adolescents and adults. Go to <http://www2.cdc.gov/nip/adultimmsched/> and take the quiz to find out which vaccines you may need.

Contact your local health department, federal and state funding for vaccines may be available for the uninsured and/or underinsured.

Resources:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1200696/>

<http://www.anaimmunize.org/>

<http://www.who.int/immunization/en/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/>

<http://www.ncnurses.org/>

<http://www.nfid.org/info/>