



Responsible Entities' Communications and Partnerships Reference Guide

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I. INTRODUCTION

Overview

As part of your role as a responsible entity (RE), you constantly serve as frontline support for providers and the general public. While there are several components necessary for efficient management, communications remains an essential cornerstone. The DSHS Immunization Unit has created this guide to assist with your communication efforts.

How to Use this Guide

This guide can be used by people and organizations with different levels of experience in communications. It's designed to be used in a flexible manner.

We encourage you to make this document your own, using its content as a base, because creating change through communication tactics isn't a 'one-size-fits-all' process. It takes flexibility, combined with sincerity of purpose and the ability to constantly re-evaluate approaches and tactics. So, with these words, we leave you to explore this guide and expand your ability to get the most out of your efforts.

DSHS Immunization Unit Support and Contacts

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II. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Defining Community Partnerships

Effective partnerships are essential for community-based solutions for improving immunization rates by making it a shared vision and value, increasing the community's capacity to shape outcomes, and fostering multi-sector collaboration. Many different stakeholders can lead or participate in supporting and implementing such solutions.

Community partnerships include the formal and informal local, state and national community connections, collaborative projects, and relationships that advance immunization rates in Texas.

Types of community partners may include but are not limited to: hospitals and clinics, school districts, institutes of higher education, healthcare providers, parent groups, community-based organizations (local nonprofits and associations), health and immunization stakeholders, and faith-based institutions.

Examples of Community Partnerships

RE immunization programs most frequently partner with schools, other health departments, individual healthcare providers, healthcare clinics, and hospitals. Partnerships often fall in the categories of advisory committees, commissions, alliances, networks, task forces, and coalitions. Examples of partnership activities include monthly/quarterly meetings, conducting community Flu Clinics, to collaborating to create educational materials to distribute to parents. Below are some examples of formal and informal partnerships.

Formal partnership examples:

- The Health Collaborative of Bexar County (TX) is managed by a separate 501(c)3 organization. Within this collaborative is the Immunize San Antonio (IZSA) coalition.
- Formalized community-provider task force with signed agreements to increase immunization coverage for a specific population.

Informal partnership examples:

- The San Francisco Health Improvement Partnership (CA), the partnership is managed by the health department, but does not have a highly formalized structure.

- Several hospitals working together with the local health department to address various priorities identified in a community health needs assessment.
- Standing invitations to speak about immunizations at local nurse's association trainings.

Tools for Community Partnerships

- **Formal agreements:** Written agreement between two or more individuals who join as partners. A valid partnership, however, can exist without a written agreement in which case the provisions of the statutes governing partnerships would apply.
- **Digital communications:** Digital communication is about the use of our reading, writing and oral skills while using digital communication devices. These might include computers, mobile phones, televisions, the internet, e-mail and lots of other types of communication methods.
- **Online communities:** At a base level, an online community is a group of people with a shared interest or purpose who use the internet to communicate with each other. Organizations often create online communities as a professional, sometimes private, network to bring people together around a shared business-based experience or purpose for expansive online collaboration and growth.
- **Social media:** Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.
- **Digital learning/webinars:** Digital learning is an instructional practice that makes use of a broad range of technology-enhanced educational strategies.

III. COALITIONS

Defining Coalitions

A coalition is a group of organizations and individuals who work together to address a shared concern and accomplish a common goal. When organizations from a variety of sectors join together, they can often have a greater impact than anyone can do alone. They do this by providing a forum to:

- Share ideas and strategies.
- Distribute responsibilities and risk.
- Build consensus around key issues.
- Engage in coordinated action.
- Maximize talents.
- Build relationships.

Because vaccine-preventable diseases impact individuals of all ages and circumstances in a community, coalitions can be important forces for improving immunization rates. Given constraints and limited resources, they are uniquely positioned to promote immunizations by better coordinating and leveraging resources to educate community members and medical teams, advocate for science-based immunization policies, and reduce barriers to accessing vaccines.

Examples of Texas Coalitions

- Immunization Collaboration of Tarrant County
- South Plains Immunization Network

Coalition Basic Function

“[A Dose of Change](#)” toolkit provides the necessary information and guidance for those interested in forming a coalition, as well as to assist existing coalitions in growing and improving their effectiveness.

IV. COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Defining Educational Activities

As referenced in the DSHS Immunization Contractors Guide, REs are required to plan and implement community educational activities (see 7.5 Community Partnership).

Community educational activities should meet the following criteria:

- The educational activity must include immunization-focused content.
- The educational activity must be intentional with a predetermined purpose.
- The educational activity must be organized, involving the transfer of information to attendees/participants in a broader sense (knowledge, messages, ideas, strategies).

Remember to coordinate with partners during your initial planning phase. For example, contact local community groups and ask to have a presence at their upcoming special event.

If you need guidance on whether or not your planned educational activities fully meet the required criteria, please contact the PIET Group contacts for guidance:

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Examples of Community Educational Activities

Want to tell the community about a new required shot? Wondering how to recognize this year's National Immunization Awareness Month? Or do you just want to make sure the public knows you exist?

Choose the educational activity that best meets your overall objective.

Sample Educational Activities

- Community Health Fairs or Targeted Events (i.e. back-to-school shots), as an organizer or attending vendor
- Immunization-focused community talks w/ subject-matter experts
- Mobile community health information clinics
- Webinars
- Scheduled/quarterly distribution of materials to local health and wellness offices
- Public screening of immunization-related documentaries
- Primary/Secondary Art Projects recognizing immunization-specific national observances

V. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES RESOURCES

- A. Meeting Agenda Template
- B. Meeting Minutes Template
- C. Event Flyer Sample
- D. Educational One-Pager Sample
- E. Recruitment Letter Sample
- F. Coalition Toolkit: [“A Dose of Change”](#)

A. Meeting Agenda Template

MEETING AGENDA

DATE

TIME

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call/Introduction of Attendees

III. Approval of minutes from last meeting

IV. Reports

A. Description of issue

B. Description of issue

C. Description of issue

V. New Business

A. Description of new business

B. Description of new business

C. Description of new business

VI. Next steps/Next meeting

VII. Adjournment

B. Meeting Minutes Template

Meeting Minutes

[Name of Meeting/Organization]

List of Attendees/Representing Organizations Present

Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

- Motion
- Vote
- Resolved

Reports (briefly explain each item)

Business (briefly explain each item)

Next Steps (briefly explain)

Meeting adjourned at XX:XX am/pm

C. Event Flyer Sample

Immunization Clinic

Go with a simple headline, large font.



Images are great. Make sure they match your target audience. We suggest going with 1 to 4 images. More than that will make your flyer too busy.

DATE & TIME:

LOCATION:

Place more details in this section, specific to your special event. Include contact information here as well.

Here's where you put the important info. You can also explain why people should attend/participate. Sell...sell...sell.

Every Dose Matters.

Place the name of your LHD/PHR in this area, along with any logos/names of partners.

D. Educational One-Pager Sample

The Texas Immunization Registry (ImmTrac2)



Keeping up with vaccine records is now easier than ever with the Texas Immunization Registry, ImmTrac2. The online registry consolidates immunization records from various administering providers including large chain pharmacies, private, and public providers.

Benefits

By enrolling in the secure and confidential ImmTrac2, pharmacists can:

- Proactively identify individuals needing a flu shot.
- Evaluate vaccines due or past-due according to ACIP recommendations or Texas school and child-care requirements.
- Assess individual immunization records to avoid over-vaccinating or missed opportunities.
- Offer individuals their official immunization record.
- Eliminates the cost to individuals requesting immunization records transferred between service providers



If possible, break up your text with subheads and bulleted lists.



Registry Consent

A child registered in ImmTrac2 must sign an adult consent form when they turn 18 years old. The registry holds childhood immunization records until the participant turns 26 years old. If a person does not submit an Adult Consent Form (EF11-13366) by their 26th birthday, their immunization records are deleted.

Forms and Documents

Consent forms for minors (under 18 years of age and signed by their parents or guardians) and adults (18 or over) can be found in English and in Spanish by going to the ImmTrac2 website (www.ImmTrac.com) and then clicking on FORMS in the menu bar near the top of the screen.



Sign up! For questions or additional information, visit our website at www.ImmTrac.com.

Place the name of your LHD/PHR in this area, along with any logos/names of partners.

E. Recruitment Letter Sample

LOGO/OFFICIAL LETTERHEAD

Month Day, Year

Name

Organization

Address

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Name

On behalf of [LHD/PHR name], I would like to invite you to participate in [EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY NAME], taking place on [TIME, DATE] in [LOCATION]. The goal of this event is to [ex. Inform our community about the importance of preventative health programs].

Your organization plays an important public health role in our community. Thanks to your efforts, individuals and families are able to improve their quality of life. By partnering with us at this event, you will be able to expand your reach providing essential programs and services.

Please contact [NAME] at XXX.XXX.XXXX or by email [name@emailaddress.com] to confirm your availability or if you should have any additional questions.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

F. Coalition Toolkit

[A Dose of Change: Building Capacity in Your Immunization Coalition](#)

Created by The Immunization Partnership for DSHS, this comprehensive toolkit provides immunization stakeholders and coalitions with updated tools and resources to establish and sustain effective coalitions.

It includes:

- Strategies for improving immunization coverage rates.
- Practical information on establishing, managing, and sustaining a coalition.
- Background information provided by DSHS regarding vaccinations and public health.
- Instructions on developing a communications plan.



A DOSE OF CHANGE: Building Capacity in Your Immunization Coalition





TEXAS

Health and Human Services

**Texas Department of State
Health Services**

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