

## Legislative & Policy Update

### **New Senior Policy Analyst in OICP – Hannah Febach (she/her)**

Hannah joined the OICP in January 2020. She began her career in public health as a member of the fundraising and events team at the Pierce County AIDS Foundation (PCAF). After receiving her graduate degree, she transitioned to the State Auditor's Office to work as a Performance Auditor where she's been for the last three years. Hannah holds a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and Women's & Gender Studies from Pacific Lutheran University and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from The Evergreen State College. Hannah believes that government best serves the public when policies are created and implemented through the lens of democratic governance. In her free time, she enjoys running, cooking, and adventuring with her partner, Cody.

### **2020 Legislative Session Wrap Up**

Proposed immunization related legislation was lighter this session. We saw the introduction of two notable bills; House Bill 2626 would've created an informed consent exemption and Senate Bill 6636 would've required the Department of Health to establish a reporting system for vaccine adverse events. Both bills did not make it out of committee.

### **Upcoming Special Session**

We are busy preparing for a likely special session to occur possibly in August. This session will be focused on budget reductions to address losses in state revenue due to the economic impacts from COVID-19 and to identify funding for additional COVID-19 response efforts.

## Health Promotion

### **Influenza Health Education Campaign 2020-2021**

The primary purpose of this campaign is to enhance influenza vaccination coverage. Increasing influenza vaccination coverage will decrease stress on the health care system at a time when COVID-19 activity is expected to be circulating. This is a critical part of the COVID-19 response work that extends beyond the Department's current capacity. The campaign is planned to run from August 2020 to March 2021.

Funding for this grant came from the CARES Act and will include a media buy, direct mailings, and healthy equity work. In addition, the funding will allow the Department to expand their outreach to populations with historically low vaccination rates, low English proficiency, and those at high-risk for influenza complications.

### **0-24 Month Immunization Mailing**

After the COVID-19 pandemic was declared, data showed childhood immunization rates decreasing in the state. The Department used the Immunization Information System to identify children from 0-24

months of age due for immunizations or who were behind the immunization schedule. 76,000 households received mailings in English and Spanish to encourage parents and guardians to make appointments with their child's health care provider.

The mailings included health education messaging to reassure families of the safety of resuming vaccinations during the pandemic. The mailings also communicated the urgency of taking action.

### **Stay Safe, Stay Healthy, Stay Vaccinated Campaign**

The Stay Safe, Stay Healthy, Stay Vaccinated campaign was created to encourage families to keep their children vaccinated. The campaign includes helpful resources for parents, a social media toolkit, a flyer in 6 different languages, and guidance for providers. You can view campaign content on WithinReach's web page here: <https://immunitycommunitywa.org/covid-19-and-immunizations/>.

### **Immunization Rule Change Communication**

The State Board of Health approved immunization rule changes for schools and child cares effective on August 1, 2020. Medically verified records are required for school and child care entry, conditional status language is clarified, and the Tdap immunization requirement was moved to 7th grade. The Department has communicated these changes over the past 6 months, including partner communication with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. A new web page was created to clarify the rule changes, which can be found here: [www.doh.wa.gov/schoolimms2020](http://www.doh.wa.gov/schoolimms2020). The web page includes a variety of new materials and letters to support schools, child cares, and providers.

### **Child Profile Mailings for New Kindergarteners**

In May, the Department used the Immunization Information System to identify children at 4-5 years of age who were missing immunizations required for kindergarten entry. 35,000 families received mailings through the child profile system, identifying the specific immunizations their child was missing for kindergarten entry. The mailings also stressed the importance of immunizing during the pandemic.

### **COVIDVaccineAnswers.org**

The Vaccine Education Center (VEC) at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) has launched a Q&A page dedicated to answering questions about COVID-19 vaccines. CovidVaccineAnswers.org points to a page on the VEC site where people can get answers or submit questions. Current sections on the page include:

- Types of COVID-19 vaccines
- COVID-19 vaccine studies
- COVID-19 vaccine availability
- COVID-19 vaccine safety
- COVID-19 vaccine news

CHOP will continue to add questions and answers as they are submitted. If you have questions you would like to see addressed, please reach out using the form linked to the email at the top of the page or email Charlotte Moser at [moser@email.chop.edu](mailto:moser@email.chop.edu)

### **The Public's Role in COVID-19 Vaccination: Planning Recommendations Informed by Design Thinking and the Social, Behavioral, and Communication Sciences**

The Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security has published a report offering COVID-19 vaccination planning recommendations. The report considers human factors in relation to future vaccines against the COVID-19, drawing on insights from design thinking and the social, behavioral, and communication sciences. It provides recommendations—directed to both US policymakers and practitioners, as well as nontraditional partners new to public health’s mission of vaccination—on how to advance public understanding of, access to, and acceptance of vaccines that protect against COVID-19. Read the report linked here: <https://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org/our-work/publications/the-publics-role-in-covid-19-vaccination>

### **AAP's State Immunization and Strategy Action Team Initiative**

Through the State Immunization and Strategy Action Team Initiative, the AAP will support a virtual learning collaborative focused on improving human papillomavirus (HPV) and pediatric influenza vaccination in rural and underserved areas where vaccination rates are low and engage key partners that pertain to immunization, rural health, and/or underserved populations. The purpose of the collaborative is to support state teams in developing and implementing a plan to reach rural and underserved populations with immunization strategies. The collaborative will kick off with virtual team meetings in September 2020 and include virtual meetings through July 2021.

Applications are open to AAP chapters, health departments, immunization coalitions, health care systems, and other organizations working to address rural and underserved populations. The application and three letters of support are due by July 27, 2020. For more information, contact Melissa Ponce at [mponce@aap.org](mailto:mponce@aap.org).

## **Clinical, Quality, Epidemiology, & Schools**

### **Immunize WA campaign**

Due to pandemic impact on healthcare provider offices, the annual campaign winner announcements were delayed. Nominations were not reopened, but the Immunize WA campaign celebration including winner announcements will be done the week of August 17, 2020.

### **Program Effectiveness**

During the last January meeting, Dr. Pat deHart presented information about our Program Effectiveness, B1B2 grant work. As an update, school out of compliance metrics were selected for the program focus for fiscal year 2020-2021. Additional information will be provided at a future meeting.

### **Immunization Quality Improvement Program (IQIP)**

The IQIP program is relaunching in July after being on pause due to COVID-19 pandemic response work. One temporary option in the IQIP program allows for virtual/tele options for initial and ongoing provider enrollment and visits.

### **Upcoming education/webinars:**

- Immunization webinars are update on our [immunization training webpage](#) weekly. OICP will create “on demand” videos to discuss the basics of the immunization schedule and catch-up recommendations for each childhood/adolescent vaccine.

- Upcoming webinars for providers include a flu webinar in early fall and a vaccine safety and adverse events reporting webinar by the end of the year. Continuing education will be available.
- Immunization clinical questions related to vaccine recommendations, the immunization schedule, or the Immunization Information System forecast, can be sent to our dedicated immunization nurses mailbox: [immunenurses@doh.wa.gov](mailto:immunenurses@doh.wa.gov).
- A webinar on vaccine safety and investigation/reporting of adverse events is scheduled to be held later this year.

## Vaccine Management

### Vaccine Choice

Due to the increasing response and precautions taken because of COVID-19 the Spring Vaccine Choice was skipped, however the Fall Vaccine Choice will take place.

### Hepatitis A

Last year, many counties in Washington State reported an increase in hepatitis A cases. In July 2019, the Department of Health declared a statewide outbreak. As of March 26, 2020, there were 287 reported cases, with 162 hospitalizations and five deaths. The department has a dedicated hepatitis A outbreak web page with weekly updated case counts. You can also find graphs, factsheets, and provider resources. Link: [www.doh.wa.gov/hepatitisAoutbreak](http://www.doh.wa.gov/hepatitisAoutbreak).

Since April 2019, local health jurisdictions (LHJs) have ordered more than 10,000 doses of state supplied hepatitis A vaccine. Together with their community partners they've administered more than 8,000 doses and held on average 1.5 vaccination events per day. We are grateful to our LHJs and external partners for their continued commitment to ending the hepatitis A outbreak in Washington.

### Childhood Vaccine Program Site Visits

#### Resuming Site Visits

- Plan:** Resume site visits July 1, 2020
- Goal:** Catch-up on overdue and coming due visits by Dec 31, 2020
  - Prioritize overdue visits from March – June, 2020
  - Conduct visits due between July – Dec, 2020
- Do:** Complete site visit project plan by July 31, 2020
  - Covering site visits between July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

#### Activities to focus on now:

- Completing any overdue site visit follow-up.
- Conducting new enrollment visits, as needed.

#### Resuming In-Person Visits:

Use the following guidelines to determine whether site visits should be conducted in a county.

Phase	In-Person Site Visits?
1	No

1 Modified	May consider
2+	Yes

**Considerations:**

- Some clinics may be temporarily closed. Plan to visit these clinics when they reopen.
- Hold off on conducting unannounced storage & handling visits.
- Follow general social distancing and disease prevention precautions when visiting clinics:
  - Wear a mask/face covering and don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
  - Keep 6 feet of distance between you and clinic staff as much as possible.
  - Wash hands/use hand sanitizer before & after storage unit inspection and when you leave.
  - Self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and reschedule visits if ill.
  - Before visiting, ask clinics:
    - About precautions they have in place for visitors (e.g. calling from parking lot before entering the building)
    - If they can do visit when office is closed to patients or during slower days/times.
    - To limit the number of participating staff.
    - If they have a room with minimal foot traffic and away from patient care areas.

**Possible triggers for pausing or stopping site visit work:**

- Reversion of phases
- Stay at home orders
- Travel restrictions for non-essential or work travel
- Local situation or local epidemiology warrants pausing

**Provider renewal**

The Childhood Vaccine Program (CVP) provider agreement renewal period is officially over. We have **87%** of providers with a current 2020 provider agreement! Provider Support Specialist are working with the remaining providers to complete their renewals. There are over 1,000 providers enrolled in the CVP and renewals take place over a three months period each year.

**Enhanced Influenza Vaccination Campaign Survey**

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is initiating an enhanced influenza vaccination campaign as a critical part of COVID-19 response work. Increasing influenza vaccination coverage is an essential step to decrease stress on the health care system at a time when SARS-CoV-2 is expected to be circulating. Due to this concern, the CDC is offering states the opportunity to request flu vaccines for adults.

The immunization program reached out to measure providers and partners interest in flu vaccines for uninsured and underinsured adults 19 years of age and older for the 2020-2021 season. The program will review the survey results to determine the best estimate of adult influenza doses to request by July 8th.