



International Community Health Services Success Story

Congratulations to International Community Health Services, who has been awarded the 2015 Immunize Washington Silver status for their adolescent immunization rates! ICHS was one of only three clinics in the state to receive this award for vaccinating over 70 percent of their adolescent patients, a population that is traditionally more challenging to keep up-to-date with their vaccines. They also received a Gold status award for getting 83 percent of their two-year-old patients up-to-date on vaccines.

"We are very proud to receive this recognition, because we are committed to providing the best service to our patients and keeping our children healthy and protected against vaccine preventable diseases," ICHS Director of Operations Sherman Lohn said.

He said high immunization rates at ICHS is the result of cooperation among the caregivers at ICHS and empowering ICHS medical assistants to work effectively with parents to make sure that children receive their vaccines on time. Every month, the immunization coordinator generates the "missing immunization" report through the Washington State Immunization Information System (IIS) and software called CoCASA. The clinic contacts patients via phone or mail to remind parents to bring them into the clinic for vaccination. Once patients are in the office, medical assistants update patients' immunization at every visit in the IIS.

Adolescents are historically more difficult to keep up to date with their immunizations. ICHS's success is due to the fact that they "engage and empower the Medical Assistant in their role to explain to parents how important it is for their children to get vaccinated." Staff training has provided a key element in their success, and ICHS "constantly updates and refreshes Immunization information for Medical Assistant to build their skills, experiences, and confidence."

"It's a long journey for us to improve; it's a job of continuity. It's not an individual goal, and it has required cooperation from the team."

The Immunize WA provider recognition program, overseen by the Washington Health Plan Partnership, which is coordinated by the Washington State Department of Health and the Washington State Health Care Authority, recognizes clinics vaccinating 70 percent or more of their toddler and/or teen patients with recommended vaccines.

High immunization rates help prevent disease outbreaks and help protect people who are not able to get vaccinated.

Clinics receiving the awards put in extra effort to achieve high vaccination rates, which shows their commitment to providing high quality patient care and protecting their patients and communities against vaccine preventable diseases.