

“Bradford Community Immunization Access: Closing the Loop”

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ATP 2018 Project Outline

Project focus: The University of Pittsburgh at Bradford students will collaborate with Bradford Family Medicine/Dr. Jill Owens to increase provider participation in appropriate immunization screening, referral for, and documentation of, adult vaccinations; and create materials for increased community awareness of adult vaccination needs.

Project details:

Course (s): NUR 1401: Nursing Research; NUR 1404: Community Health Nursing

Instructor(s): Dr. Lisa Fiorentino; Dr. Tammy Haley

Need:

Immunizations are a key public health measure to help assure healthier communities. In McKean County, the 2015 Community Health Needs Assessment identified that access to adult immunizations as a top community health need.¹ Underscoring the urgency of this need, closure of a community clinic providing services to many lower income residents at the end of 2014² coupled with additional limitations in the Pennsylvania Department of Health services³ have further reduced access to HPV and Hepatitis A & B vaccination as well as other previously available immunization services. For many small rural medical practices, the cost and associated maintenance required to properly maintain vaccine supplies may be prohibitive.

As identified by our ATP research in 2016, insurance coverage does not guarantee easy access to immunization or provider services. Providers can choose the types of coverage to accept, and they are not required to maintain vaccines for administration in the office setting. External agencies such as pharmacies may be used to administer vaccines, but many are considered out-of-network, thereby limiting access and reimbursement. This may lead to confusion on the part of the consumer and may translate to gaps in vaccination coverage and missed opportunities to maintain vaccination status.

Lost work, health impairment, or death due to vaccine preventable illnesses such as flu or pneumonia can have a dramatic impact on impoverished rural communities such as Bradford. Previous student research facilitated by the ATP in the Bradford community has identified the need to address the “circular referral” which limits immunization in the Bradford region; facilitate increased utilization of the PA Statewide Immunization Information System to enhance provider communication and limit duplication of services; and increase awareness of appropriate community based immunization knowledge and awareness. Appropriate initial screening, referral for services, and follow up is essential to begin addressing these gaps in service.

Concise overview of the project, including its central focus:

The ability of individuals to maintain currency with recommended immunizations is important for the health of the community. With recent local and regional changes in vaccine clinic availability, this strategic, collaborative, project with clearly defined outcomes to achieve optimum impact within the region, seeks to act upon the data gathered in 2016 and 2017 which assessed the available community assets for the provision of recommended immunizations, the community needs for immunization, and barriers which limit access or availability of recommended immunizations within the Bradford community. Armed with this information, and in collaboration with Dr. Jill Owens and the Bradford Family Medicine practice, we will address the identified issues uncovered through previous research, with a threefold focus. First we will provide community education to increase awareness and enhance knowledge related to immunization needs and access. Second, we will establish provider/nurse education to facilitate increased utilization of the PA Statewide Immunization Information System to enhance provider communication and limit duplication of services. Third, we will facilitate the incorporation of nurse managed protocols to build capacity and improve immunization delivery in a variety of healthcare settings.

Number and description of planned meetings with the community partner:

April 20, 2018: Meeting with Dr. Owens and Project Directors [Haley & Fiorentino] to discuss project progress to date, establish goals for the upcoming year, and plan for future meetings.

August 2018: At least once during the month of August, project directors will meet with Bradford Family Medicine/Dr. Jill Owens to discuss goals, set priorities, and finalize fall meeting dates and expectations.

September 2018: ATP student project team leaders will be identified, and small group meetings will be held with team leaders and project faculty to review roles, obligations, and expectations. Additional September activities include: 1) Skype meeting with Kostas Skordas to discuss ARC role and mission. 2) All student participants/ATP project team leaders, community partner members will meet at least once to review planned intervention, timeline, roles/responsibilities, and goals of the ARC and the intersection of the goals of the project. Revisions will be identified and integrated as needed based on the discussions with the full project team.

October 2018: Community Breakfast presentation scheduled at Bradford Regional Medical Center [10/17/18, 8:00 a.m.]. Collaborative presentation with students and Dr. Owens for presentation of project overview and initiation of provider/nurse education sessions. Project progress will be reviewed by community partners and the ATP project team in preparation for presentation of project at Penn-York Undergraduate Research Conference. Feedback will be sought from the community partner for improvement in the project presentation. The project will be presented at Penn-York Undergraduate Research Conference.

November 2018: Campus presentation for the Bradford community will be held with invitations to key stakeholders, community partner, civic organizations, and local government officials. Community partner representatives and ATP project team will meet to discuss lessons learned from Penn-York and review plans for ATP Conference presentation. Project updates will be provided and feedback generated about the process thus far and next steps will be discussed.

December 2018: Students will deliver a poster and conference presentation for the ATP meetings in Washington, D.C., December, 2018.

Goals/Objectives:

The ARC 2016-2020 Five-year Strategic Plan for Capitalizing on Appalachia's Opportunities identifies Goal 2: Increase the education, knowledge, skills, and health of residents to work and succeed in Appalachia. Action Objective no. 6 [Use proven public health practices and establish sustainable clinical services to address health conditions that affect the Region's economic competitiveness] and no. 7 [Develop and support sustainable programs that remove barriers to participating in the workforce] are directly impacted by this project.

Further, Goal 5: Build the capacity and skills of current and next-generation leaders and organizations to innovate, collaborate, and advance community and economic development. Action Objective no. 2 [Empower and support next-generation leaders and encourage authentic engagement in local and regional economic and community development]; no. 3 [Strengthen the capacity of community organizations and institutions to articulate and implement a vision for sustainable, transformative community change], and no. 5 [Develop and support networks, partnerships, and other models of collaboration that catalyze public, private, and nonprofit action for community impact] will be addressed through the use of University, community, and student collaboration to achieve the project goals.

2018-2019 Project Goals:

- Develop and distribute educational materials to increase community awareness and enhance community knowledge of recommended adult immunizations.
- Develop and deliver provider based education for the use of the PASIIS system.
- Develop and deliver provider based education for a structured nurse managed protocol for the assessment of immunization status, immunization need, and appropriate referral or delivery and follow up for recommended immunizations.
- Students will present an overview of the project to the community partner and regional healthcare providers at a Community Breakfast meeting.
- Students will present the project findings to a civic organization [Rotary] and community partner as part of a campus based community program.
- Students will present a poster or podium presentation at the Penn-York Undergraduate Research Conference.

- Students will develop a poster and conference presentation for the ATP meetings in Washington, D.C., December, 2018.

PROJECT IMPACT:

- Students will develop an understanding and demonstrate skills necessary for the conducting of community based education and capacity building.
- Students will develop the skills required to develop community resources for individuals seeking recommended immunization services.
- Students will gain an appreciation for engagement in professional networking with healthcare providers, public health officials, and non-profit organizations to enhance available services and build local capacity and infrastructure.
- Through community collaboration and presentations of the project findings at the local, regional, and national level, skills will be introduced and refined to build confidence, public speaking and leadership among student participants.
- Partnerships between the University and the Bradford area healthcare providers will be strengthened.
- Awareness of the specific nature of the health issues within Appalachia with regard to immunization status and risk will be highlighted within the Bradford community.

References

¹Bradford Regional Medical Center 2015 Community Health Needs Assessment (2015). Retrieved 06/02/16 from: <https://www.brmc.com/files/chna-and-data-supplement.pdf>

²Adagio Health closes offices in Bradford, St. Marys. Retrieved 07/28/17 from: http://www.bradfordera.com/news/adagio-health-closes-offices-in-bradford-st-marys/article_8b34f606-45db-11e4-a238-4b88dff01d39.html

³Questions answered on vaccines purchased with 317 funds. Retrieved 07/28/17 from: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-managers/guides-pubs/qa-317-funds.html>