What They Did:

The experience of a primary care practice in Pittsburgh, PA serves as an example of a dedicated immunization champion using evidence-based strategies to increase immunization rates.

Jo Anne Stadtfeld, RN, is a practice manager for three physician offices with four physicians and a staff of 14. She became an immunization champion as part of her practice’s effort to improve immunization rates using the 4 Pillars™ Immunization Toolkit.

Developed by the University of Pittsburgh, the 4 Pillars™ Immunization Toolkit is an evidence-based program designed to increase immunizations across the lifespan. The toolkit guides practices to utilize a combination of strategies from each of the four pillars:

- **Pillar 1 - Convenience and Easy Access**
  - Increased clinical staff/provider-patient discussion about vaccinations
  - Pillar 4 - Motivation
  - Implemented Standing Order Protocols for influenza, pneumococcal and Tdap vaccines
  - Initiated comprehensive tracking of vaccinations given and frequent sharing of progress with clinical staff
  - Encouraged co-administration of vaccines as permitted by CDC
  - Planned Saturday influenza vaccine clinics to increase access
  - Increased clinical staff/provider-patient discussion about vaccinations
  - Recorded on-hold phone messages about the importance, accessibility and convenience of obtaining flu vaccination at their offices
  - Ensured relevant staff training
  - Led system-wide efforts to better capture and document through EMR all immunizations delivered outside of their practice

Jo Anne, with the help of her team, used a combination of strategies to improve vaccination coverage among their patients. Among their initiatives, they:

- Changed patient care protocols to assess vaccination status at every patient visit through review of the Health Maintenance and Immunization tabs of the Electronic Medical Record (EMR)
- Implemented Standing Order Protocols for influenza, pneumococcal and Tdap vaccines
- Initiated comprehensive tracking of vaccinations given and frequent sharing of progress with clinical staff
- Encouraged co-administration of vaccines as permitted by CDC
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- Increased clinical staff/provider-patient discussion about vaccinations
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Results:

Due to Jo Anne’s sustained efforts and working through the 4 Pillars™ Immunization approaches, 461 patients received Tdap, 2417 patients received influenza vaccine and 158 patients received pneumococcal vaccine between June 2014 and January 2015.

These strategies led to an increase in Tdap vaccination from 36% to 43% and a 2014-2015 adult influenza vaccination rate of 46%.

Jo Anne personally called a subset of the practice’s high-risk patients to encourage pneumococcal vaccination. This personal touch mattered; every patient Jo Anne called made an appointment to be vaccinated.

The 4 Pillars™ Toolkit offers practical advice and tools to medical practices that want to increase immunization rates. It proposes a formula guided by the evidence-based strategies outlined by the Community Preventive Services Task Force Review. It also emphasizes the power of motivation, as a distinct and necessary ingredient.

The evidence shows that using multiple strategic approaches leads to substantially higher vaccination rates compared to using a single strategy approach.

By selecting evidence-based strategies that align with the practice’s culture and environment, and infusing the improvements with her energy and motivation, Jo Anne Stadtfeld has proven to be a winning immunization champion for this practice.

This “What Works” vignette is one in a series of examples collected in 2015 by the Provider Workgroup of the National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit. For more information or to nominate an example of “what works” to improve adult immunization, go to http://www.niapmpartners.org/. This vignette does not constitute an endorsement from any of the organizations that participate in the Provider Workgroup of the NAIIS.