

Improving Flu Accessibility Among the Underserved in San Diego, California

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Introduction

Champions For Health is a nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing the health needs of low-income, uninsured, and under-immunized populations within San Diego County by providing free flu, Tdap, and hepatitis A vaccinations. Our immunization program aims to provide access to life-saving vaccines for all by removing financial and geographic barriers to care, improving individual health literacy, and fostering a vaccination culture among the community. This poster will highlight our recent immunization efforts against the flu and the work done to minimize disease burden and maximize health and wellbeing.

Methodology

Vaccines & Materials

Flu vaccine doses were state-funded and provided by the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency Public Health Services Immunization Branch (HHSA). Medical supplies were purchased through funding received from UnitedHealthcare and Binational Health Taskforce sponsorships.

Strategic Geographic & Partnership Selections

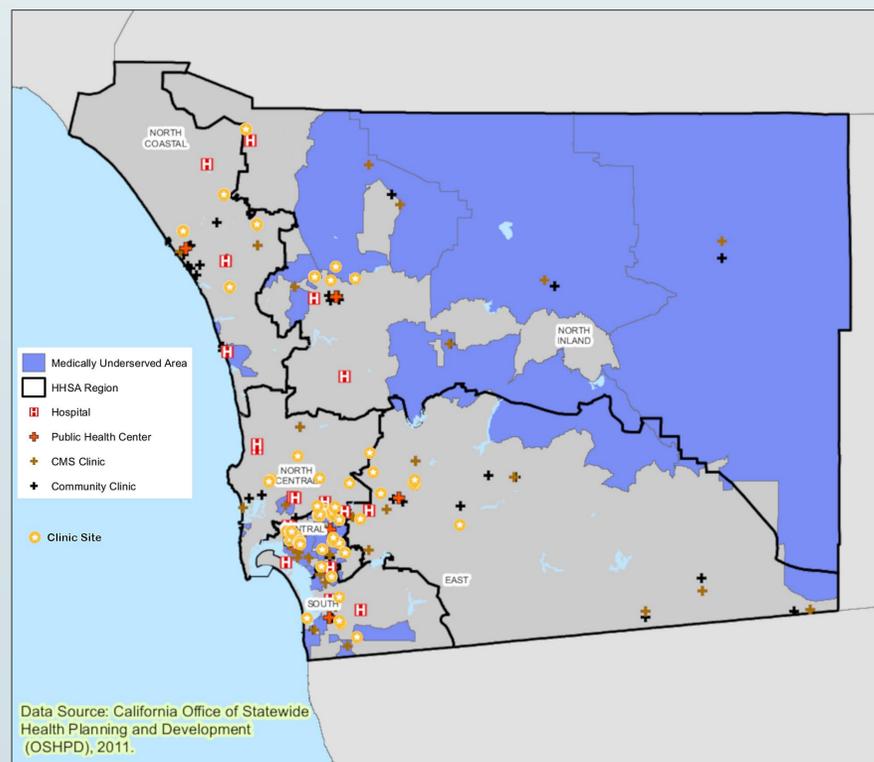
Medically underserved areas of San Diego County were identified from HHSA data and the Live Well Communities Healthiest Cities and Counties Challenge Initiative and indicated high poverty and low immunization rates. Targeting zip codes within these areas, we researched key sites to station at and outreached to local organizations that focused on underserved populations to partner with.

Volunteer-Driven

Clinics were entirely run by volunteers. Vaccinators were all medical volunteers consisting of nurses, pharmacists, and physicians both independent and organizationally-affiliated. Volunteer medical interpreters were recruited to meet the ethnically-diverse patient population. Partnerships with medical associations and health and medical professional schools created large medical volunteer networks that we mobilized in our immunization efforts.

San Diego Regional Immunization Registry (SDIR)

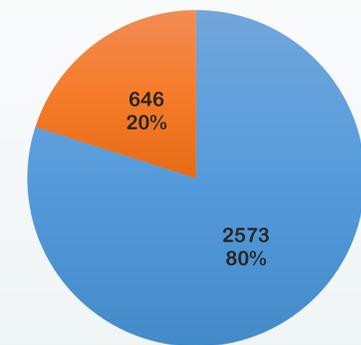
We registered as a SDIR user to record administered flu vaccines and update patient immunization records.



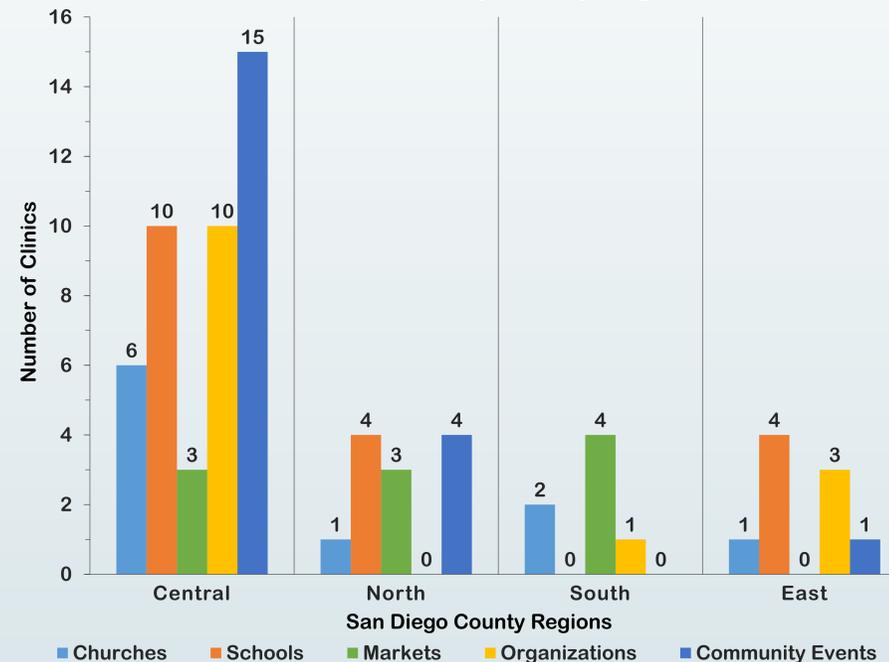
Results

From September 2018 – February 2019, Champions For Health organized 72 flu clinics throughout underserved regions within San Diego County and administered 3,219 flu vaccinations to these communities. Of those who were vaccinated at our clinics, 80% of our patients reported either that they had no health insurance or that their health insurance did not cover the cost of flu vaccinations. More than half of our clinics were located within Central Region of San Diego County, where we introduced flu vaccines to large concentrations of the local homeless population. Within all regions of the county, we consistently provided more flu vaccines to populations who were uninsured or underinsured, helping to bypass the financial barriers they otherwise would have faced.

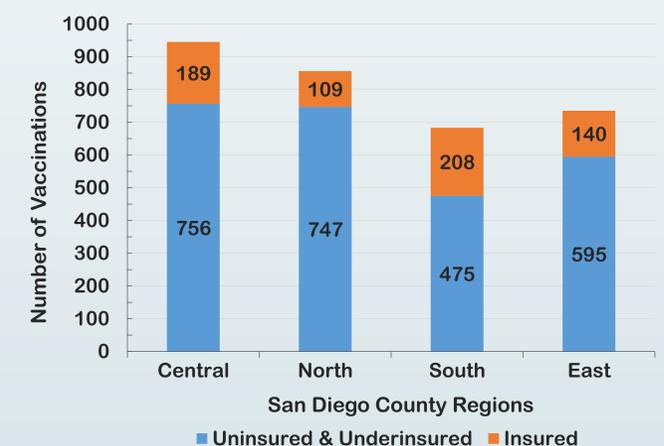
Distribution of Patients Vaccinated (n=3,219)



Flu Clinic Venues by County Region



Flu Vaccinations Administered



Challenges & Successes

Challenges

- ❖ Some clinic locations had low patient turnout due to event unawareness and vaccine hesitancy.
- ❖ Several patients sought other health services that we could not provide on-hand.

Successes

- ❖ Strategically selecting locations and forming key partnerships resulted in high immunization rates for uninsured and underinsured patients.
- ❖ Many patients were registered into SDIR for the first time, and existing patients had their records updated.
- ❖ Our vaccination efforts translated to at least \$50,000 in health savings to the consumer.
- ❖ Champions For Health was ranked the 3rd highest flu vaccine provider in San Diego County.

Future Directions

- ❖ Identify additional key locations to hold vaccination clinics in other regions of San Diego County.
- ❖ Integrate more preventive health opportunities and services into clinics that can be readily provided.
- ❖ Distribute materials that detail ACIP-recommended immunization schedules and resources that address vaccine hesitancy.
- ❖ Develop a means to refer patients to other local resources that can follow-up with additional health and social services.

References

1. County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency. (2013). San Diego County Atlas of Medically Underserved Areas/Populations, Health Professional Shortage Areas, & Registered Nurse Shortage Areas, May 2013. Available at https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/documents/CHSHealthcareShortageAtlas_2013.pdf.

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