Virtual Awards Presentation

June 18, 2020
About the Awards Program: The awards program recognizes the value and extraordinary contributions of individuals and organizations towards improved access to adult vaccinations and influenza vaccinations within their communities. The National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit (NAIIS) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2020 Immunization Excellence Awards. In 2020, there are three categories of recognition: overall influenza season activities, “immunization neighborhood” adult immunization champion, and corporate campaign awards. Nominees were evaluated based on the areas of impact, collaboration, originality, overcoming challenges, and opportunities. The Summit applauds all stakeholders who are working towards improving the health of their communities. Information about the awards program and recipients can be found at izsummitpartners.org.
Their approach so leaders and employees could be successful. In 2019 they introduced a policy that required the vaccination for all employees. The policy also aligned with the employee influenza approach taken by Sanford Health – a growing hospital system with whom the Society merged with effective Jan. 1, 2019. Sanford Health was a valuable partner throughout the transition to the new policy.

Education and communication were key to getting leaders and employees on board. Technology aided in communication, accountability and tracking. The employee flu shot tracker gave individuals or leaders an easy way to indicate if they had been vaccinated or if they were requesting a medical or religious exemption from the vaccine. Local and regional leaders could use the tracker to see how vaccination rates were improving as the Society approached the November 1, 2019, flu vaccine deadline. Additionally, reminders were sent from the tracker to managers. Through these methods and others, the Society achieved a 98% employee influenza vaccination rate. Approximately 1% of employees have an approved medical or religious exemption and mask when working near residents or clients. In year one of the new policy – extended to more than 19,000 employees – this was a big achievement.

**Fremont County Department of Public Health and Environment**

_In 2019, Fremont County Department of Public Health and Environment (FCDPHE) worked to improve the vaccination rates within their community by removing barriers to access and collaborating with local businesses to have the greatest reach and impact. In October, FCDPHE, in partnership with emergency preparedness, Pueblo Community College Nursing program, and Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) hosted a free mass flu vaccination clinic open to the public. In all, over 300 participants received their flu vaccine at no cost to them or their insurance provider._

_In addition to the free mass flu vaccine clinic, FCDPHE participated in several travel clinics to eliminate the barrier of transportation for those who live in rural Fremont County. Clinics were open to the public, and hosted by local libraries, community centers or schools._

_Lastly, FCDPHE partnered with local businesses, public offices, and interested employers to host travel flu vaccine clinics on-site. They recognized the difficulty to schedule time outside of business hours to schedule an appointment for themselves and their families, so they partnered together to provide a clinic for the employee and their family. This not only improved overall vaccination rates, but proved to be a great employer wellness benefit and an opportunity to provide health education, schedule future vaccination clinics for other needs, and connect with those who live and work in their community._

_In total, FCDPHE provided 17 clinics, in addition to their normal clinics provided during regular business hours. In 2019, FCDPHE gave 1270 flu vaccines._

**National Winners**
Honoring the Memory of Laura Scott

“She made the world a better place for our children and all of us.”

In 2015, the National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit (NAIIS) Steering Committee renamed its NAIIS Immunization Excellence Award for Influenza Season Campaign to the Laura Scott NAIIS Immunization Excellence Award for Outstanding Influenza Season Activities. The award recognizes innovative early and later influenza season activities across the lifespan (pediatric, adolescent and/or adult activities) embracing the spirit and dedication to the prevention of influenza and protecting individuals from vaccine preventable diseases embodied by Laura Scott in her work as Executive Director of Families Fighting Flu. Her early death took her from us but the trail she left will live on forever.

On March 3, 2015, Families Fighting Flu (FFF) lost its long-time Executive Director and co-founder, Laura Scott. Laura was also an active participant in NAIIS and within the immunization neighborhood. As described by the FFF board, “Laura was truly the heart and soul of the organization for the ten years of our existence.” Laura helped launch Families Fighting Flu and it was her tireless hard work, dedication and brilliance that enabled its tremendous success. She spent countless hours educating the public and saving thousands of lives. Even though she did not personally lose a child to influenza, her love and support helped impacted families through their darkest days by helping them channel their grief into a meaningful legacy that honored children and families, and made a difference. Laura truly was a hero, who made the world a better place. She was an incredible wife and mother, and friend to us all.

Laura Scott

2019–20 Outstanding Influenza Season Activities Award

“Sawbones: A Marital Tour of Misguided Medicine”
(Huntington, WV)

Since 2013, Dr. Sydnee McElroy (a family physician) and her husband Justin McElroy have produced weekly episodes of their one-of-a-kind podcast called “Sawbones, A Marital Tour of Misguided Medicine.” Currently the world’s most popular medical podcasts, downloads of their shows average more than 250,000 per week. People in their twenties and thirties, an age group known to be undervaccinated, constitute a large share of the “Sawbones” audience.

Discussing a wide variety of interesting medical topics that attract listeners from across the age span, their friendly engaging delivery achieves high regard from their audience for both authoritative science-based information and entertainment. Many listeners tell the McElroys that a main attraction of the show is they learn important health-focused information which they can share with friends. It is within that context that they are able to weave their favorite topic, vaccination, and especially influenza vaccination during flu season, year after year.

The “Sawbones” theme of “myth busting” aligns perfectly with describing how certain substitutes for vaccination are ineffective. They promote the general use of vaccines and have specifically discussed HPV and adenovirus but their main emphasis is influenza. Their support for flu vaccination includes promoting the use of community vaccinators. They recently described personal stories of getting vaccinated at their neighborhood pharmacy. One recent show asked listeners to send in their “reasons” for not having yet gotten their flu shots. They then produced an episode called “27 Reasons Why You Should Get a Flu Shot” in which they busted the 27 most common excuses submitted by “blowing them to smithereens.”

These podcasts are particularly special because they are able to move positive messages about vaccination into a demographic that is undervaccinated against influenza. Their 2018 release of “The Sawbones Book” became a New York Times bestseller. All current and past productions of “Sawbones” are available online at www.maximumfun.org/podcast/sawbones.

National Winners
Immunization Champions
patients and the community, WCCHC embarked on a two-year initiative to drastically improve its HCP vaccination rate. It set an ambitious goal of reaching 90% without the benefit of any additional resources and without negatively affecting employee satisfaction – a tall order!

The initiative was a huge success by achieving over 95% vaccination rate; placing it among the top 3 health facilities in Hawaii. WCCHC attributes its success to a unique program that leveraged internal coordination, targeted communications, and cross-departmental collaboration. The decision to take this approach was informed by toolkits published by the CDC and NAIIS, and best practices from the field of international development where nonprofits are continuously refining strategies for implementing vaccination programs in low-resource settings.

Reaching a 95% flu vaccination rate not only protects individual staff from influenza but also contributes to herd immunity for vulnerable patients and community members. Additionally, the approach taken by this initiative increased clinical education of front-line health workers while strengthening interdepartmental collaboration and employer-employee trust. Potentially the most valuable output, however, is a model of how other community health centers might replicate the success of WCCHC and increase their own HCP vaccination rates.

**Laura Scott**
2019–20 Outstanding Influenza Season Activities Award

**Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center**
(Waianae, HI)

The story of how the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC) increased their employee influenza vaccination from 26% to over 95% in just two years holds valuable lessons for other community health centers. WCCHC is a midsize Federally Qualified Health Center meeting the needs of underserved communities in Oahu, Hawaii. In 2016, only 26% of its 700 dedicated staff received their annual flu shot, among the lowest in the state. Recognizing the risk this posed to patients and the community, WCCHC embarked on a two-year initiative to drastically improve its HCP vaccination rate. It set an ambitious goal of reaching 90% without the benefit of any additional resources and without negatively affecting employee satisfaction – a tall order!

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Carolyn Cook, RN  
(Tacoma, WA)

“Flu kills more people per year than any other vaccine-preventable disease.” If one phrase embodies Carolyn Cook’s driving force, it would be that. She is one of the most well-known and highly regarded immunization advocate in Pierce County, Washington. Her leadership and innovation regarding flu vaccination coverage has earned her that respect. Prior to working as a public health nurse at the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, she was the Mary Bridge Immunizations nurse for 17 years. She has channeled that knowledge and experience from working with countless patients and families into program planning to improve flu immunization rates across the county, for all residents 6 months and older. Her list of flu vaccine projects and advocacy lengthens every year to ensure that all eligible residents have access to flu vaccine.

Carolyn’s most notable achievements was the creation and ongoing success of the School Located Influenza Vaccination (SLIV) Clinics. For over a decade, she has fostered collaboration between the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, the Medical Reserve Corp, local universities, and local school districts to go into some of the highest need schools in the county and provide free influenza vaccination. This past year alone, over 2200 children were immunized against the flu.

Carolyn is one of the founding members of the Pierce County Infant Immunization Initiative (I3). This collaborative of immunization nurses works to address barriers to immunization in the community and has expanded to include participation from Madigan Army Medical Center. Additionally, she hosts an annual meeting of the county’s school nurse leads and the Mary Bridge Mobile Immunization Clinic to identify needs of the community. She also founded the Private Provider Project, which connects private providers with their local school districts.

Her work from the population down to the individual level is inspiring, from answering questions of vaccine hesitant parents, to lecturing university students on the importance of flu vaccine, to addressing barriers to flu vaccines through a county-wide project. Carolyn is a true influenza immunization champion.
Special Recognition

**THANK YOU** to the members of the NAIIS Awards Committee:

- Phyllis Arthur (BIO)
- Carolyn Bridges (IAC)
- Amy Parker Fiebelkorn (CDC)
- Claire Hannan (AIM)
- *Sarese Marotta (FFF)
- Diane Padden (AANP)
- *Mitchel Rothholz, (APhA), chair
- Elizabeth Sobczyk (GSA)
- LJ Tan (IAC)
- Tiffany Tate (AIM)
- Pat Vranesich (IAC)
- *LaDora Woods (IHRC / CDC)

* = did not vote on or participated in any or some categories

ACCESS NAIIS INFORMATION AND RESOURCES AT:  [https://www.izsummitpartners.org/](https://www.izsummitpartners.org/)
About the National Adult & Influenza Immunization Summit

The National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit, started in the year 2000 (as the National Influenza Vaccine Summit), is an action-oriented entity with more than 700 members who represent more than 130 public and private organizations with an interest in addressing and resolving influenza and adult vaccine issues. Visit the Summit’s website at izsummitpartners.org

STANDARDS FOR ADULT IMMUNIZATION PRACTICES

The National Vaccine Advisory Committee’s revised Standards for Adult Immunization Practice were released on September 10, 2013. The NVAC standards recognize the importance of the healthcare provider recommendation for patients to receive needed vaccines, the current low vaccination rates among U.S. adults, and reflect the changed environment within which adult vaccines are now given. The standards were published in the March/April 2014 issue of Public Health Reports.

ALL healthcare professionals should take the following steps to ensure that adult patients are fully immunized and have maximum protection from serious diseases.

1. **ASSESS** immunization status of all patients in every clinical encounter.
2. **SHARE** a strong recommendation for vaccines that patients need.
3. **ADMINISTER** needed vaccines or REFER to a provider who can immunize.
4. **DOCUMENT** vaccines administered or received by your patients.