**Operation Zero Exclusion**

Pediatric Community Health Initiative (PCHI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>* Project Title:</th>
<th>Operation Zero Exclusion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Project Start Date:</td>
<td>08/01/2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Project End Date (for this application):</td>
<td>09/30/2023</td>
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<td>* Name of the organization where you work:</td>
<td>Pediatric Medical Program</td>
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<td>* Describe the setting where the project work occurred (&lt;400 characters):</td>
<td>Project occurred in a local public school district, Columbus City Schools. The project sites included all middle and high schools within the district, a total of 28 school buildings.</td>
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### Pediatric Community Health Initiative Description

**Background / Statement describing the rationale for this project (400-2000 characters):**

*Evidence-based statement describing the background and rationale for the project in the context of improving infant, child, adolescent, and young adult health.*

School required immunizations are an important component of public health infrastructure and provide direct protection to the school community and area a mechanism to promote timely vaccination of children. The AAP Policy statement: Medical Versus Nonmedical Immunization Exemptions for Childcare and School Attendance supports regulations and laws that require certification of immunization to attend childcare and school as a means to provide this safe environment and limit the availability of non-medical exemptions.

We also know how important it is to attend school on a regular basis. In fact, the AAP supports school attendance, and the role pediatricians can play to ensure children are avoiding chronic absenteeism. Children who miss more than 2 school days in the first month of school are significantly higher risk for chronic absenteeism (Baltimore Education Research Consortium. Why September matters: improving student attendance. 2014). The AAP policy statement: The Link Between Attendance and Good Health highlights the need for pediatricians to play a key role in attendance promotion. This project reflected an effort to improve access to school-based immunization clinics to improve both vaccination rates and a reduction in missed school days due to vaccine exclusion by school.
* Baseline Data:

Quantitative data, obtained either from a local resource or directly collected by the applicant(s), supporting the need for a community-based intervention that benefits the health of infants, children, adolescents, and/or young adults.

School nurses update vaccination records the first week of school and inform parents of needed vaccination. If the student is not up to date by the 14th day of school, then they are excluded until an appointment can be completed. The school nurse tracks the missed school days through their school system called Infinite Campus.

At Columbus City School district (large public district of 47,000 students), school required immunizations for 7th and 12th grade need to be current after 14 days of school or the student is excluded until parents can make an appointment and provide documentation showing the updated immunizations. In 2022, there were over 1,100 students excluded who missed a collective of over 3,500 days of school.

* Objective of the project (250 - 850 characters and must be supported by current evidence):

Objective of the project was to form a partnership between the school district nursing team, Columbus Public Health Department, and Nationwide Children’s School Health team to provide a system of onsite vaccination clinics at each area middle and high school within the first 14 days of school to improve immunization rates and minimize vaccine exclusions. By providing on-site vaccination clinics, the school nurses could communicate with families this additional option available to them before being excluded from school. Parents are not required to be present at the health visit, improving equitable access to care.

* Community Partners:

List the community partners or stakeholders that you partnered with for this project.

Columbus City School District
Columbus Public Health

* Interventions / Approach to addressing the identified gap (200 - 850 characters; bullets acceptable):

Describe the work done in the community to address the gap identified with the baseline data.

Columbus City School Nurses identified all students who were at risk of school exclusion due to vaccine delay. Messages went out to families about the potential vaccine exclusion and the option of consenting for a school-based on-site vaccination clinic. Columbus Public Health and Nationwide Children's Hospital School Health team partnered to create a schedule of vaccine clinics for each partner to be able to provide a clinic at every middle and high school in the district before the exclusion day. The process for working alongside school nurses to identify students, obtain consent, and create and operation plan for the clinic was discussed at length through several partnership meetings. A streamlined process for paper and verbal consent was created, available in multiple languages. School nurses at each school provided the team with a list of families and helped with initial contact. Once consent was obtained, a schedule was created, and a vaccination team arrived at the school. The school nurse, principal, and front office staff assisted with the flow of the clinic and bringing students to and from class.

* Impact (400 - 2000 characters):

Share quantitative data demonstrating your accomplishments and describe how the work impacted the community.

Each health care partner (NCH and CPH) visited a total of 14 schools. Many schools actually ended up with two different vaccination clinics as the exclusion day approached and additional families opted to consent for the services. A total of 28 vaccination clinics were completed by each health care team for a combined total of 56 clinics. Columbus Public Health served: 346 students / 800 vaccines Nationwide Children's Hospital Clinic served: 293 students / 577 vaccines In total there were 1377 total vaccines given between CPH and NCH serving 639 students.

This impact was also reflected in a reduction of missed school days due to immunization exclusion with a 60% decrease in the total number of students excluded due to immunization noncompliance from the previous school year.
* Lessons learned and future direction:

Describe at least 1 lesson learned, how you plan on sustaining the gains, and any future plans. If there were any opponents to the work or barriers to success, please describe those here, as well.

Lessons learned included the amount of time needed to message out the opportunity to families through school communications. School nurses are incredibly busy at the start of the school year. Our earlier scheduled clinics did not receive as many consents as hoped and ended up requiring each health care partner to visit the school a second time to ensure they captured all the students who wished to participate in an on-site vaccination clinic.
Additionally, including all levels of school administration (not just the school nurse) in initial discussions may have expanded our impact on communication out to the school community.
Both health care partners and the school district are committed to continuing this project in future years.