

Roles of Medical Providers in Addressing Barriers to HPV Vaccination Rates in Rural Nebraskan Clinics: A Community Initiative

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PURPOSE: To determine the impact of medical providers' approach on HPV vaccination for their early adolescent patients at privately insured clinics in rural Nebraska.

BACKGROUND: HPV vaccination rates in Nebraska are currently above the national average, however there is still a need for improvement of these rates particularly among 9 to 11-year olds. **METHODS:** In collaboration with CHI Health, 11 Phase III PCMH clinics without prior history of interventions to improve vaccination rates were selected. Clinic personnel completed an online survey and baseline HPV vaccination rates from 2019 were provided for each clinic.

RESULTS: Survey identified 9 to 11-year olds as the most difficult group to discuss HPV vaccinations. Limitations for vaccination were parents' hesitancy and completion of a multi-dose series. Clinics demonstrated a discrepancy in HPV vaccination rates for ages recommended by the CDC guidelines. Primary barriers for completing HPV vaccination were parents' low-level of HPV vaccine education and lack of provider comfort while engaging in open-dialogue with their patient/parents. Actively applying educational resources will help to sustainably increase HPV vaccination rates across clinics; addresses lack of understanding HPV vaccine at a patient-level and introduces new communication techniques to enhance patient care.