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Project Summary

The goal of this CARE project is to prevent the severe sequelae of childhood illnesses with a focus on vaccination for children of Amish and Mennonite communities. While there are multiple ways to reduces the overall burden of illness in childhood, these children in particular are at greater risk and effective vaccination can prevent devastating outcomes.

Methods

The first step is to identify local partners already working with these communities to get a better understanding of their culture and what interventions they would be comfortable with. This may need to extend past physicians to non-physician healthcare practitioners, community leaders, and religious leaders. My plan is to:

- Identify local beliefs and attitudes towards vaccination
- Distribute information regarding vaccination addressing concerns and general benefits
- Follow up with mobile vaccination clinics in at-need areas

Background

- Around 18,000 individuals live in Plain communities in New York
- Plain children are **twice as likely** to be hospitalized for vaccine preventable illness when compared to non-Plain children
- Plain children are **five times as likely** to be unvaccinated when compared to non-Plain children
- Some Amish schools in New York have vaccination rates as low as 0%
- Commonly people believe that low vaccination rates amongst these communities are related to poor access to healthcare, religious objections, or objections to medical technology however when by far the most common listed reasons are concerns over the harmful effects of vaccines and the total number of vaccines. This is in line with the general opposition found to vaccination in other groups
- In plain communities in Illinois and other states two step programs first disseminating information about vaccines then following up with vaccination clinics have been successful in increasing vaccination rates amongst Plain children

Objective

To increase vaccination rates in Plain communities of Upstate New York by a two step enhanced vaccination campaign focusing on reduced vaccination schedule

Outcome Measurement

- Process measures would include both information distributed and vaccinations given
- Intermediate outcome measurement would be vaccination rate amongst Plain communities
- Ultimate outcome measure would be rate of vaccine preventable illness amongst Plain communities

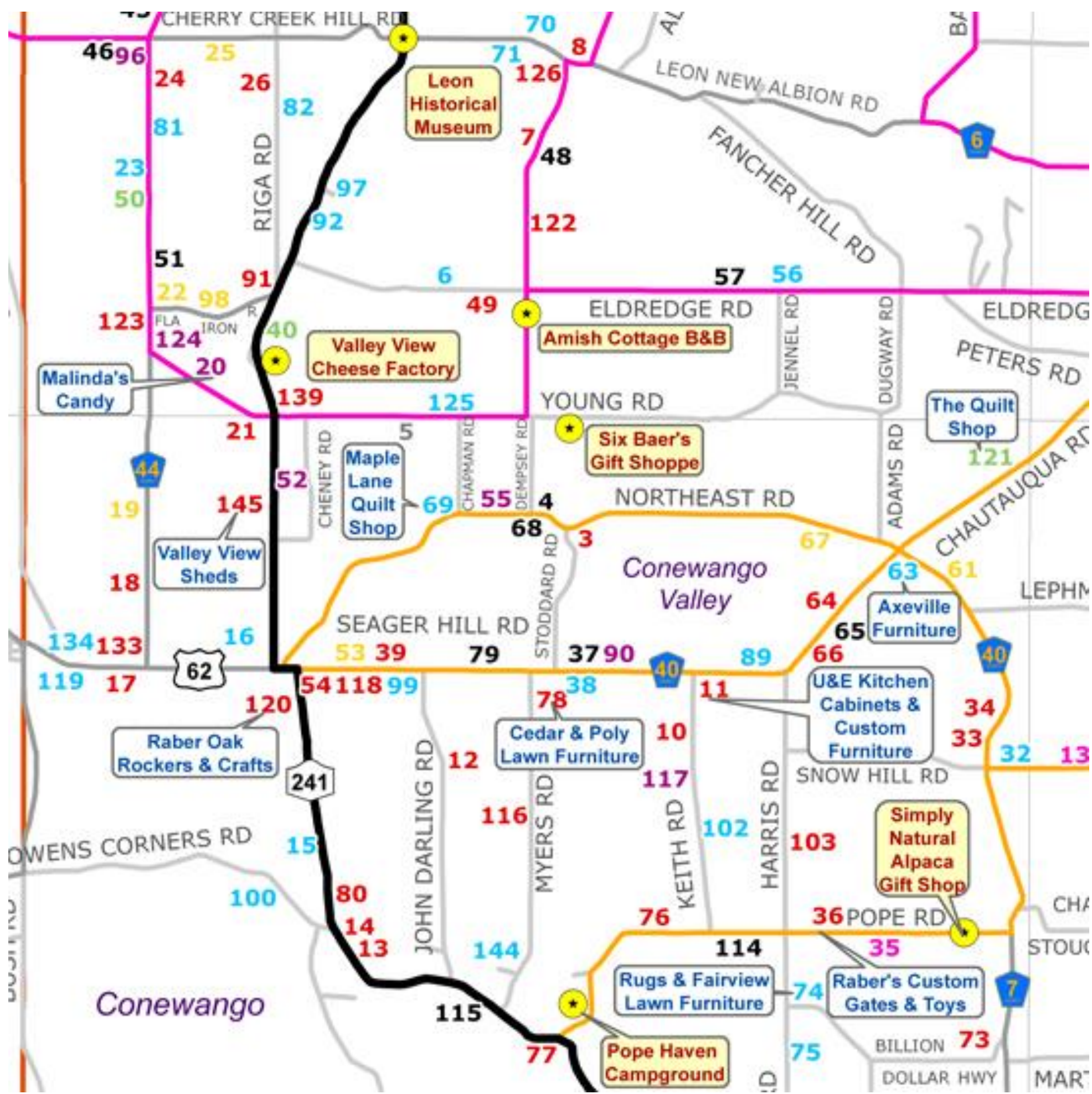
Work in Progress

Currently working on identifying local partners. Efforts far more likely to be successful if presented with someone already involved with the community.

References

Communication and mass vaccination strategies after pertussis outbreak in rural Amish communities-Illinois, 2009-2010.
Medina-Marino A1, Reynolds D, Finley C, Hays S, Jones J, Soyemi K.
J Rural Health. 2013 Fall;29(4):413-9. doi: 10.1111/jrjh.12019. Epub 2013 Mar 25

New York's Amish Trail



The Conewango Valley is home to one of America's oldest Plain communities