

Eliminating Disparity in Childhood Immunization and Primary Care

Case for Action:

- A 1990 study revealed a divide between urban and suburban children in immunization rates and other preventive health services:
- 18% difference between inner city and suburban vaccination rates--55% for inner city 2-year-olds compared to 73% in the suburbs

Description:

- Children need immunizations and well child visits to protect them from dangerous childhood diseases, complications, and to ensure that they are thriving. Often poor and minority infants and toddlers fail to receive care in their early years. The Primary Care Outreach Program is designed to ensure that both inner city and rural babies receive immunizations and well-child care.
- Outreach Workers (ORW), drawn from the target communities work in 10 urban health care practices that primarily serve inner city children.
- Outreach workers perform simple reminder, recall and outreach activities designed to improve immunization rates and preventive health screenings and visits
- The ORW's not only facilitate children staying on track with immunizations and with well-child care, but also find children lost to care who are in inadequate or unsafe environments
- This project, started as a research study in 1993 to address Rochester's low immunization rates and marked disparities in preventive services, is now supported and sustained by all three of the region's integrated health care systems, two major insurers, a major Medicaid Managed Care IPA and a neighborhood health center network.
- Serves 70% of city of Rochester children up to 3 years old.

Partners/Funding:

- Strong Health, Via Health, Unity Health
- 10 of the area's largest primary care practices serving children.
- Excellus, Monroe Plan and MVP
- Monroe County Department of Health , New York State Immunization Registry

Outcomes:

Recognized as the most effective program in the nation to improve immunizations, the impact of this program includes:

- Reaching over 10,000 children annually.
- Removing the disparity in rates of immunization between suburban and city children,
- Raising childhood immunization rates in the City of Rochester from 55% to 87%, higher than rates in NYS (68%) and the nation (71%).
- Increasing preventive-care visits, (20%) anemia screenings (12%), and lead screenings (8%)

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