

Addressing vaccine hesitancy

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TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: The primary target is immunization providers in Oregon and the secondary target is public health professionals who interface with Oregon families.

ABSTRACT: Vaccines are one of the most important public health achievements and their success depends on confidence in their safety and effectiveness. Vaccine hesitancy, alternative schedules, and vaccine refusal destabilize individual and community immunity increasing the number of unprotected children. This is evident by Minnesota's 2017 measles outbreak which is largely confined to a vaccine hesitant community. Of the 76 total cases, 73 are children of which 70 were unvaccinated. Oregon has a growing population of vaccine hesitant parents and the highest kindergarten vaccination exemption rate in the country. An outbreak similar to Minnesota's is a serious concern for many Oregon communities.

A well informed pediatric staff who strongly supports vaccination can correct misconceptions and convey the importance of vaccination and the risks associated with not doing so. Providers who are prepared to respond to parental concerns with evidence based research, to dedicate time to a thorough conversation, and to personalize messaging can influence attitudes toward vaccines. Research shows that a strong provider recommendation has the most potential to influence patient vaccination uptake. Increased intervention by healthcare professionals creates an opportunity to shift Oregon's growing population of hesitant parents toward full vaccination and to prevent outbreaks in our vulnerable populations.

OBJECTIVE(S):

- Define vaccine hesitancy.
- Describe at least one factor contributing to vaccine hesitancy.
- Identify at least one tool to address vaccine hesitancy among parents.

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