



Health System Showcase

Headquartered in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Sanford Health includes 44 medical centers, 482 clinics, more than 2,000 providers, and over 9,000 registered nurses who provide services in 26 states and 9 countries. Sanford serves over 40,000 adolescents ages 11-17.

SPOTLIGHT ON

**Sanford Health,
Sioux Falls, SD**



Overview

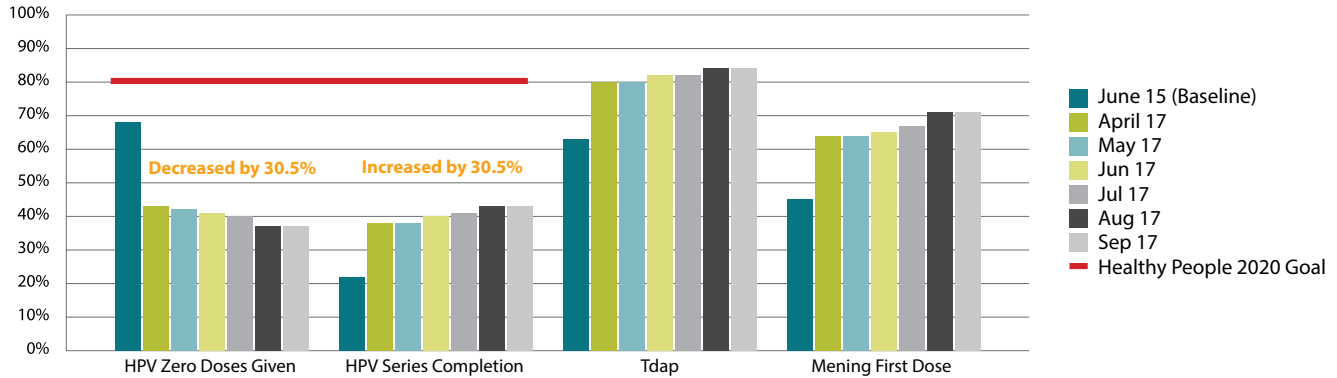
- Sanford Health prides itself on being a center of excellence in cancer and pediatric care. In 2015, HPV vaccination was prioritized as a result of national efforts to spur HPV cancer prevention.
- Sanford's initial efforts were led by a passionate staff member who was empowered to pull individual provider and clinic vaccination rates. She made a case for the need for improvement and secured external funding to convince system leadership to dedicate resources to make improvements. The initial project was conducted from June 2015 to July 2016. Phase two expanded the scope in 2017 from 7 sites to 39 sites.



HPV Vaccination Rates

BASELINE RATES		POST-INTERVENTION RATES	
Among 11-26 year olds in 2015:		Among 11-26 year olds in 2017:	
Zero doses=68%		Zero doses=38%	
Series completion=22%		Series completion=42%	

Sanford Vaccination Rates Among Patients Ages 11-26







Steps to Success

- ESTABLISHED A LEADERSHIP ROLE.** Sanford Health created an Immunization Strategy Leader role. The strategy leader was responsible for oversight and consultation to all clinics and departments that administered vaccines. The leader also coordinated efforts to improve vaccination rates, created standards for immunization practices, and assisted with educating staff on vaccine-preventable diseases and the vaccines available to prevent them. The leader
 - › had the trust of influential Sanford leaders such as medical officers and senior executive directors of nursing and clinical services and
 - › was responsible for a spectrum of vaccination-related areas such as education, oversight of vaccine storage and handling, monitoring immunization rates, and strategizing efforts to improve rates.
- FOCUSED EFFORTS.** Sanford focused first on seven large family medicine clinics in the Sioux Falls metro area.
- EMPOWERED NURSES.** Nurses led the processes of rolling out vaccination strategies. Education materials emphasized that vaccination strategies were nursing processes and that doctors should enable nurses to use protocol orders so that nurses could feel comfortable using them.
 - › Repeated metrics indicated that the initiative was ongoing and not temporary.
 - › Providers and nurses found the metrics very useful.
- IDENTIFIED HIGH-IMPACT OPPORTUNITIES.** The plan created the highest impact by targeting clinics that served the largest pediatric and adolescent populations and working with established pediatricians and family medicine providers that had adolescent patients of appropriate age for HPV vaccination.



Key Players

 <p>Immunization Strategy Leader Led all system-wide immunization QI initiatives</p>	 <p>Multidisciplinary Team Incorporated cross-functional leadership to oversee the initiative</p>	 <p>Enterprise Immunization Committee Established as a new governing body to make immunization decisions for the organization</p>	 <p>Regional Immunization Committees Formed regional groups to expand reach and impact of strategies through best practice sharing</p>
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Leadership Champion

Andrea Polkinghorn, RN
Enterprise Immunization Strategy Leader

Andrea brings clinical nursing experience to her role as an innovative, big-picture thinker. She strategically utilized Sanford's data to illustrate gaps in care as compared to Healthy People 2020 targets. Armed with data and buoyed by grant funding, she made an iron-clad case for senior leadership to support HPV vaccination.



Key Strategies & Interventions

DOMAIN	STRATEGY	POTENTIAL ISSUES	LARGE SYSTEMS ACTION GUIDE #
 PRACTICE	Structure Leadership Create an Immunization Strategy Leader role. Build new enterprise and regional committees for structure and leadership. Use multidisciplinary teams.	Time is required to increase awareness and update stakeholders.	Action #1: Establish an HPV vaccine team.
	Every visit is a vaccination opportunity Encourage the utilization of all visit types as vaccination opportunities. Audit missed opportunities.	Change can be hard for the staff. Older adolescents do not come in as often as younger patients for wellness exams and may not be accustomed to vaccines being provided at acute or follow-up visits.	Action #3: Create a culture of cancer prevention. Action #4: Reduce missed opportunities.
 TECHNOLOGY	Alerts = patient safety Team up with the medication safety officer and IT to address common safety events, and maximize alerts in electronic health records. Create recalls and schedule follow-up visits before patients leave the office.	Alerts and recalls may require IT support.	Action #4: Reduce missed opportunities.
 EDUCATION/ OUTREACH	Recruit champions Create a "Vax Champ" vaccine education and training program. Select a champion at every clinic. Launch with an in-person event. Include monthly assignments and webinars in the training program. Provide leadership development to engage clinician leaders.	Providers require time off clinical work to attend these sessions.	Action #2: Educate leadership. Action #3: Create a culture of cancer prevention.

Next Steps

Since the completion of the pilot project, Sanford Health has continued to work on improving HPV vaccination rates. The health system successfully secured another round of funding from South Dakota's Cancer Coalition's HPV grant, which supported the addition of 32 more clinics in the state of South Dakota in 2017-2018.

Sanford Health continues to send reminder postcards during each back-to-school season. For the 2019-2020 back-to-school season, reminder postcards will be disseminated to adolescents overdue for HPV, Tdap, and/or Meningococcal vaccine. An HPV-specific reminder letter, inclusive of facts about HPV, will be sent to adults ages 18-26 who are overdue for the HPV vaccine. Lastly, a specific focus is being placed on improving HPV vaccination rates for patients who see OBGYN providers.

Lessons Learned

- 1. GET STRONG EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP SUPPORT.** Get on the radar of executive leaders to brief them on HPV vaccination work. Attend meetings of medical directors, nurse executive councils, and clinic executive directors. Be proactive in researching the topic and communicate with leaders to create an environment where it is easy for them to be on board. It is important to specifically state what you are looking for them to do (i.e., require attendance during education, provide direction to their clinic leaders, etc.).
- 2. FUNDING HELPS.** Take the initiative to find sources of funding or grants to bolster the initial phases of the program. Seed funding may help to build the case for your organization to invest supporting resources down the line.
- 3. DATA IS KEY.** Influencing leadership starts with pulling the relevant data and evaluating how the organization is performing. Share unblinded data at the provider level as compared to the Healthy People 2020 target. If provider-level data isn't possible because there are too many clinics, compare clinics. Engage with IT, and use progress indicators that help to motivate progress. Build performance monitoring reports with IT based on specifications defined by the team. There are multiple ways to measure and track performance. Sanford Health has chosen to track patients with zero doses, patients with 1 dose, and patients who have completed the series.
- 4. SHARE THE WINS.** Make sure that champions, providers, and leaders are recognized for the work. This helps to justify the effort and resources spent on the project and increases motivation.
- 5. CREATE A DEDICATED STRATEGIC LEAD.** Having a dedicated immunization strategy leader role demonstrates an organizational commitment to prevention and high standards of care. This centralizes responsibility for all immunizations over all clinics and departments that administer vaccines. This role coordinates efforts to improve vaccination rates, standardizes immunization practices, and educates staff on vaccine-preventable diseases and the vaccines available to prevent them.
- 6. LEVERAGE CLINIC-BASED VAX CHAMPS.** A "Vax Champ" program is a 6-month education and training program that trains ambulatory clinical staff to become vaccine experts. Program topics include vaccine storage and handling, administration, general principals of vaccination, vaccine-preventable diseases and the vaccines available to prevent them, vaccines for high-risk patients, the Vaccines for Children program, vaccine safety, vaccine myths, VAERS reporting, and training on how to confidently recommend and address questions. Unique components of the Vax Champ program include leadership development and the implementation of a performance improvement project. To effectively implement change, Vax Champs are trained on how to influence and lead. Vax Champs evaluate their data and select evidenced-based interventions that are shown to improve vaccination rates. Later, we created Vax Champs at the regional level to distribute responsibilities. This helped to maximize impact and increase overall sustainability.



How can you implement changes in your health system?

See the HPV Roundtable's *Clinician & Health Systems Action Guides* at <http://hpvroundtable.org/action-guides/>