



Shoo the Flu Process Evaluation: What Did We Learn?

BACKGROUND

Shoo the Flu (StF) brings free flu vaccines to Oakland-area elementary school students. This school-based immunization program is a partnership among the Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD), the California Department of Public Health, the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), funded by the Page Family Foundation, and aided by over a dozen community partners and endorsers. From 2014 to 2017, Shoo the Flu partnered with Cardea to conduct a mixed methods process evaluation of its three-year pilot. The evaluation objectives were to (1) assess implementation of the school-based influenza vaccination program, (2) determine school-based vaccination rates and contributing factors, and (3) assess program costs. Cardea used data from program consent forms; surveys completed by school contacts, clinic site managers, Shoo the Flu staff, and parents; interviews with schools staff and program partners; program cost data; and the American Community Survey. Summary findings from the pilot are presented here. The data presented are from Year 3 analyses unless noted otherwise.

FINDINGS

Shoo the Flu was well-received and engaged elementary schools across Oakland and Piedmont

Shoo the Flu consistently engaged and recruited schools across all geographic regions in Oakland. Of the 110 schools that participated in 2016, 39% came from East Oakland, 19% from each the Northwest and Northeast regions, and 12% each from Central and West Oakland. The distribution by region remained consistent across the three years. Among the 78 schools that participated all three years of the pilot, StF vaccinated nearly 1 in 4 students on average each year. School staff and volunteers reported high satisfaction and engagement in the program; 86% hoped to see StF return to their school.

Vaccination clinics ran efficiently and effectively

Vaccination clinics continued to run efficiently and effectively in the third year of the pilot. Almost all schools (93%) adapted well to the shift to injection-only clinics after the national recommendation that the nasal mist flu vaccine not be used. Site managers also reported that 96% of their clinic teams were cohesive and worked well together.

Shoo the Flu reached students from diverse populations

StF provided 28,649 vaccinations over the three years of the program. Among students vaccinated in year 3, 38% were Hispanic, 25% Asian, 24% non-Hispanic white, and 11% non-Hispanic black. Students who participated in the program came from neighborhoods representing a broad range of socioeconomic positions with 30% of participating students from ZIP codes experiencing the highest levels of socioeconomic distress and 27% from ZIP codes experiencing the lowest levels of distress. OUSD students who participated in StF were also comparable in residential socioeconomic distress levels to students who did not participate. At the school-level, high socioeconomic distress had a strong association with lower participation in the program.

Over the three years of the pilot, Shoo the Flu improved cost efficiency

The cost per-dose of vaccinations declined by 52% over the three year pilot. Key areas of cost reduction include: consent form packages (-95%), medical supplies (-75%) and program promotion (-67%). StF anticipates further cost reductions in year 4 via reductions in program operating staff and marketing.

The county health department has a plan to sustain Shoo the Flu

Program staff and partners have made progress on planned steps to ensure the program continues. Steps include: (1) securing financial support from insurers who cover the majority of students, (2) integrating StF as a program of ACPHD, and (3) continuing to reduce program costs. While ACPHD has increased staff involvement in the program, executed contracts, and hired a full-time staff person to manage the program, securing ongoing financial support from insurers has proven more challenging.

Detailed reporting on these evaluation findings is available upon request.
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