

SNAPSHOTS

Immunization registry news from the American Immunization Registry Association (AIRA)

Welcome to SnapShots, the American Immunization Registry Association's newsletter (formerly published by All Kids Count) about the progress, best practices, and accomplishments of immunization registries across the country. We invite you to share news about your registry. Email us: [SnapShots@hln.com] or call us at (212) 676-2325 with information about a successful programmatic or technical innovation, major accomplishment, or milestone that your registry has reached. SnapShots is sent to subscribers quarterly by the American Immunization Registry Association (AIRA) and posted on AIRA's web site: www.immregistries.org. Past issues also are available on the All Kids Count web site: <http://www.allkidscount.org>.

Announcement

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2003 Immunization Registry Conference

Conference Location: Crowne Plaza Ravinia
4355 Ashford Dunwoody Rd.
Atlanta, GA 30346-1521

Conference Dates: October 27-29, 2003

Call for Abstracts and Invitation to Register

Register to attend the Conference, obtain more information about the conference, and submit your abstract on the Internet at

www.cdc.gov/nip/registry/irc

Deadline for abstract submission is June 17, 2003

The conference will provide a forum to build support for immunization registries, enhance collaboration, promote multiple and innovative uses of registry data, explore alternative funding strategies, and demonstrate immunization registry success.

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President's Column

To facilitate the collection and sharing of knowledge and best practices related to immunization registries, AIRA is planning to create a Web-based Knowledge Management (KM) tool. Your input is needed to make this tool as useful as possible to AIRA members. A survey will soon be sent out by the AIRA Education Committee to solicit your ideas on documents and other printed materials that you would like to access via the Web. Please respond to this survey as soon as you can.

Discussions are underway between AIRA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Public Health Informatics Institute of the Center for Innovation in Health Information Systems to form a partnership to develop the KM tool. The KM tool will enable AIRA members, and the broader public health informatics community, to gain access to an information repository on immunization registries through AIRA's Web site at www.immregistries.org. The repository will contain documents that are collected, peer-reviewed, curated, and maintained by AIRA. These documents would include lessons learned, best practices, standards, and how-to guides, as well as published literature.

In addition to the information repository, AIRA is proposing to add a section to its Web site entitled *Registry Profiles*. This will be a searchable database of registry attributes and material on a project-by-project basis, with links to project Web sites. The active participation of registry project staff will be critical to populating this database with useful and timely information. Your input on this will also be sought through the survey. I urge you, again, to complete and return this survey promptly. I thank you, in advance, for your participation and support. (Amy Metroka, AIRA President)

PROW Standards of Excellence endorsed by NVAC

The potential for registries to support other program components of an immunization project is attracting increasing attention nationally. Last year, AIRA released its *PROW Registry Standards of Excellence in Support of an Immunization Program*. The publication provided an important opportunity to partner with AIRA's sister association, the Association of Immunization Managers (AIM), as well as the Registry Support Branch at NIP.

Publication of the *Standards of Excellence* also led to a resolution by the National Vaccine Advisory Committee (NVAC) in February 2003. The resolution supports the concept of registries playing a greater role in supporting other components of an immunization program, and reads:

The NVAC believes the growing maturity and functionality of immunization registries demonstrates they can play an increasingly important and critical role with immunization programs. In particular, the recent joint efforts of the Association of Immunization Managers, the American Immunization Registry Association, and the National Immunization Program have highlighted ways in which registries can provide important support to other core program strategies, such as assessment, vaccine management, reminder-recall, and provider quality assurance. The NVAC believes the CDC should continue working with its partners to identify and disseminate best practices for registry support of an immunization program, such as those found in the Registry Standards of Excellence in Support of an Immunization Program.

AIRA thanks Dr. Lance Rodewald and Dr. Robb Linkins of the NIP, and Dr. Alan Hinman of NVAC, for helping this important resolution come to pass. Drs. Orenstein, Rodewald, and Linkins are signatories on a Dear Colleague letter that will accompany copies of the PROW Standards when they are mailed to all Immunization Program Managers and Registry Managers. This is a follow-up to a presentation and round table discussion of PROW at a recent Program Managers meeting.

With all this impetus behind its release, PROW now begins its active implementation phase. An Implementation Committee is currently examining how to best promote PROW and, very importantly, to

identify other best practices that can be incorporated into future publications. Identifying ways to incorporate questions on PROW into the Annual Immunization Registry Report to CDC is also part of its task.

The Committee is also identifying a range of immunization projects to use the PROW Standards and offer feedback on the process they used to review and select the Standards. If you have questions on PROW or are interested in being a demonstration site, please contact Bill Brand, PROW Chair, at 612-676-5144 or bill.brand@health.state.mn.us.

The Soft Side of Registries

Most of us are concentrating on implementing registries. The technical-programmatic-policy issues keep our days interesting, to say the least. But, it is important and necessary; to step back and remember what registries are all about. It is the children in our community we want to protect, and the people serving those children to whom we want to be of value. One of the most important actions we can take as a registry is to thank those people--the nurses, doctors, clerks, office managers. Some ways to do this are:

- Celebrate milestones such as the 1,000,000th shot or 100,000th shot; all shots are important.
- Celebrate anniversaries such as 1 yr, 5 yr or 10 yr.
- Acknowledge, often, those who go above and beyond, with a certificate of distinction, certificate of appreciation, partners of merit.
- Say thanks (everyone loves chocolate; well, almost everyone).
- Have campaigns, consent gaining campaign, frequent senders card – a.k.a. frequent coffee buyer card, or a scavenger hunt in the software.

These don't have to be expensive or slick. But just let those people who make the registry a tool for the health of our communities know that we appreciate their efforts. If you have some ideas to share with SnapShots or would like more information on these ideas, feel free to contact Katie Reed at kreed@phs-us.com. (Source: Katie Reed)

How Do You Measure the Performance of Immunization Registries?

How do you measure the progress and achievement of immunization registries? A paper recently published in the *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice** discusses a tool for providing providers and policymakers with information about the efficiency of immunization registries and other public health technology investments.

All Kids Count, a program funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, to foster development of state-and community-based immunization registries, undertook the development, implementation and evaluation of indicators of immunization registries in order to measure registries' progress toward their goal of becoming fully operational. The quantitative performance indicators monitored the progress of 16 All Kid Count grantees in four broad areas of immunization registry development: database maturity; timeliness of data capture; provider participation, and immunization coverage levels.

Results were reviewed to determine if 1) the indicators measured immunization registry progress, 2) the results could be compared across All Kids Count projects, and 3) other immunization registries could use the indicators. The study found that the AKC performance indicators provide a useful template for registries to measure the maturity and progress of information system development, although there are significant challenges to formulating generic indicators that are comparable across multiple systems. It acknowledges that, as registries mature during the coming years, the indicators will need to be expanded to include other performance measures.

This paper concludes that, as states begin linking immunization registries to other information systems, indicators will play an important role in informing funding agencies on progress and achievements of public health information systems.

*Saarlas, Kristin N, Edwards KC, Wild E, and Richmond, P. "Developing Performance Measures for Immunization Registries," *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, 2003, 9(1) 47-57.

Reprints of this paper are available for downloading from the All Kids Count web site:

www.allkidscount.org. (For additional information, contact ksaarlas@allkidscount.org.)

Initiative for Data Exchange between Managed Care Organizations and Registries Is on Its Way

We are pleased to announce that the Managed Care Organization (MCO)/Registry Data Exchange Initiative is well on its way. Every Child by Two (ECBT) and AIRA have put together a wonderful group of advisory committee members representing MCOs, immunization registries, National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Therese Hoyle, AIRA Board member and Michigan Childhood Immunization Registry (MCIR) Coordinator of the Michigan Department of Community Health, is the committee Chair.

The committee is finalizing a survey to immunization registries on data exchange. The survey will establish a baseline on the status of data exchange between immunization registries and MCOs in the United States. In addition, it will help us garner successful data exchange best practices that will be showcased in a "how-to" start up guide on MCO/registry data exchange collaborations. We will also be asking registries who are currently exchanging data with MCOs to become part of a group of "mentor" registries that can provide their expertise and lessons learned to their peers. The survey will be sent to registries by the end of April and will be available on AIRA's website: www.immregistries.org.

If you have a successful data exchange story to share, we would love to learn more about it. Please e-mail Aurora Oliva at aoliva@health.nyc.gov. (Source: Aurora Oliva, AIRA)

West Virginia Registry is Tracking Smallpox Vaccinations

As of April 2003, West Virginia has provided approximately 700 first responder smallpox immunizations statewide. In order to maintain the smallpox data locally, West Virginia tracks these vaccinations through the state immunization registry system, WVSIIS. The state has been using a Scientific Technologies Corporation (STC) immunization registry since 1999. With the newly developed add-on PVS Certified application, it was easy to link smallpox vaccinations with their existing registry system. The system creates the ability to use bar code scanners to capture PVS numbers quickly and accurately.

West Virginia has conducted smallpox clinics in each of its seven regions throughout the state. (Source: Michelle Bonjour, Scientific Technologies Corporation. Email: michelle_bonjour@stchome.com)

AIRA Bioterrorism Committee Is Interacting with CDC

The AIRA Bioterrorism Committee has held several conference calls to date and has provided very concrete and timely feedback to CDC in several areas pertinent to registries. Most critical was a CDC conference call on March 20, 2003, that included several AIRA Bioterrorism Committee members. During the call, revisions needed on the current CDC smallpox forms were discussed, and our feedback was seen as key since we are the ones that ensure the quality of data going from the CDC forms into PVS or our own registry systems. CDC has since drafted some major revisions and hopes to get them to us for review within the next few weeks.

Other items we continue to work on include certification of alternate registries - whether or not it is still required, Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS) and how it interacts with new CDC surveillance forms, and how CDC intends to work with registries in the future in relation to all forms of Bioterrorism or public health emergencies (pandemic flu, for instance). We, Paula Soper and Karen Nikolai, Co-Chairs, look forward to your input in these areas as we build on our relationships throughout CDC. (Source: Karen Nikolai, Hennepin County Community Health Department; phone 612-348-2441)

Upcoming Conferences

Note: You can find links to information on the following conferences and others at:

<http://www.centerforinnovation.org/events.html>

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
Public Health Information Network Stakeholders Conference
May 13-15
Atlanta
<https://sec.cdcmeetings.com/phn/index.asp>
- **Fifth National Immunization Coalition Conference**
May 28-30, 2003
Westin-Kierland Resort and Spa
Phoenix-Scottsdale, Arizona
Note: Abstracts due November 1, 2002.
Contact Tracey Ryan at tryan@hsc.usf.edu
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
2003 Immunization Registry Conference
October 27-29
Atlanta
www.cdc.gov/nip/registry/irc
- **American Medical Informatics Association**
Annual Symposium
November 8-12
Washington, DC
<http://www.amia.org/>
- **American Public Health Association**
131st Annual Meeting
November 15-19, 2003
San Francisco, CA

We hope you will forward this e-mail to others who may be interested in receiving SnapShots. TO SUBSCRIBE, please go to <http://www.immregistries.org/>. This information will remain confidential and will not be sold or passed on to other parties.

COMMENTS, PROBLEMS, OR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT US AT:

AIRA @

Medical and Health Research Association of New York City, Inc.

c/o New York City Department of Health

Citywide Immunization Registry

125 Worth Street, Box 64R
New York, NY 10013
ATTENTION: Cindy Sutliff, Executive Director
Voice: (212) 676-2325
Web site: <http://www.immregistries.org/>
Email: csutliff@health.nyc.gov

SnapShots is produced by the AIRA Education Committee. SnapShots Editor: Ayesha Gill, CA. Staff:
Katie Reed, NY.