

#### Project Goals

1. Work with the Worcester Department of Public Health, Worcester Public School Nursing Staff, the UMass Medical School Summer Undergraduate Research Program, the UMass Medical School High School Health Careers Pathway and other resources in the Worcester community to find ways to increase the vaccination rate among students in Worcester Public Schools.
2. To solicit feedback from Team Leaders of previous public school vaccination efforts in Worcester to help us improve upon our current practices
3. To prepare for the flu vaccine clinics in October 2016.



#### CDC Recommendations: Why Should We Vaccinate Yearly?

There are two main reasons for getting a yearly flu vaccine.

- Genetic changes occur in the flu virus every year, so the vaccines themselves need to be updated every season in order to provide protection against the most recent and most common viruses.
- Once you have been vaccinated, your immune system's ability to protect you from the virus declines over time. Getting a vaccine every year helps keep your immune system strong.

#### CDC Recommendations: Who Should Get the Flu Vaccine?

Who SHOULD get the vaccine:

- Everyone over the age of 6 months is recommended to get a yearly flu vaccine, however there are a few rare exceptions

Who SHOULD NOT get the vaccine:

- Children younger than 6 months
- People with severe allergies to the flu vaccine or any of the ingredients in the vaccine

Some people are at a higher risk of developing complications from the flu, including pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections, ear infections or worsening an existing chronic health problem. These people include:

- Children younger than 5 (especially those younger than 2)
- Adults 65 years of age and older
- Pregnant women (and women up to 2 weeks postpartum)
- Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities

#### Last Year in Worcester...

Over 65 volunteers

- Members of the Medical Reserve Corps
- UMass Worcester medical students and graduate nursing students
- Becker College nursing students
- Quinsigamond Community College nursing students

44 Worcester Public Schools participated

- 33 Elementary Schools
- 4 Middle Schools
- 7 High Schools

1179 students were vaccinated (of 25,000)

#### Ideas to Improve the Efficiency of Worcester Public School Flu Clinics in 2016

The following are some of the ideas solicited from Team Leaders from the 2015 Worcester Public School Flu Clinics:

Issue	Suggested Fix
Some questionnaires incomplete and needed the school nurse to call parents/guardians for answers	Have nursing staff make sure forms are filled out completely and accurately ahead of time
Some clinic locations within schools did not have enough space or privacy, or were not conducive to flow	Moving the vaccination locations within those particular schools to allow for more space and privacy
English was not the first language for some children	Have a translator accessible for non-English speaking children
Clinics were overwhelmed with students to be vaccinated	More creative mechanisms for advertising the availability of the vaccine
Some students are too young or otherwise unable to reliably identify themselves	Have teachers or admins working the clinic retrieve students from the classroom
Nurses did not have supply kits	Make sure supply kits have been received and kept in reserve

#### 2016 Worcester Public School Flu Clinics

- Will be held October 17-October 27<sup>th</sup>
- 3-5 clinic locations per day
- Most 2 hours in duration
- Volunteers can sign up in September

#### Ideas to Increase Vaccination Rates Among Worcester Youth

The following ideas for increasing vaccination rates among Worcester Youth were solicited from students in the UMMS Summer Undergraduate Research Program and the UMMS High School Health Careers Pathway:

- Promote flu vaccination at school-wide assemblies
- Competition between home rooms
- Create a social media campaign
- Provide bracelets, stickers, pins, etc. that other students notice
- Involve the teachers more in education about flu vaccines and motivating students to get vaccinated
- Simplifying consent forms sent to parents and combining them with other important forms
- Remind students at popular events like sports games, school performances, homecoming
- Have students from that school create a promotional video
- Educate parents with pamphlets

#### References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). Vaccination: Who Should Do It, Who Should Not and Who Should Take Precautions. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/whoshouldvax.htm#annual-vaccination>

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