

NMDOH News Brief

IMMUNIZATION



NM Department of Health Immunization Program

Winter 2023-24 / Issue No. 22

Community Outreach Efforts

Andrea Romero
Immunization Program Manager

This fall, Immunization Program staff participated in a multitude of conferences and community events. Fostering community relationships is a priority, and local community events provide informal opportunities to convey the most up to date vaccine information to the public, supply educational materials, and a chance for personal conversations with New Mexicans.

It has been rewarding to attend in-person events, and it is gratifying to see the great turnout from local communities. Highlighted here are the many events that Immunization Program staff have



Vaccine and Outreach Manager Joelle Jacobs at the Vive tu Vida! Get up! Get Moving! event in Los Lunas on August 5.

Community Outreach Efforts
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NMIC 21st Annual Meeting and Celebration

On December 1, NMIC held its 21st Annual meeting with about 80 people braving the weather to attend our in-person meeting! Over 100 people registered to attend, unfortunately, last-minute illnesses and snowy weather kept some folks from attending.

We had a wide range of presentations and excellent speakers. Dr. Gill Woodall with Klein Buendel presented very positive data on the research he and his team have conducted to help increase the uptake of HPV vaccine in both girls

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Immunization Program

Staffing announcements

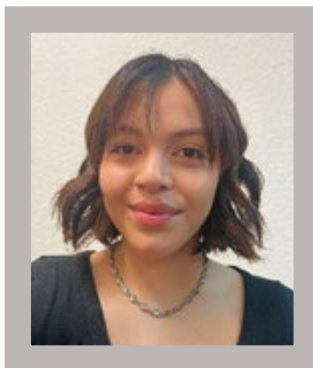
Nicolette Perez

NE Region Vaccine Coordinator

The Northeast Region has hired their new Vaccine Regional Coordinator.

Ms. Perez comes to us from the COVID side of the Dept. of Health where she worked as a contractor for the Core Surveillance team helping with COVID and foodborne illnesses.

Nicolette recently graduated from The University of New Mexico with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Population Health and Minor in Community Health. In her free time, she enjoys playing soccer and working out at the gym. Welcome to the Immunization Program team, Nicolette!

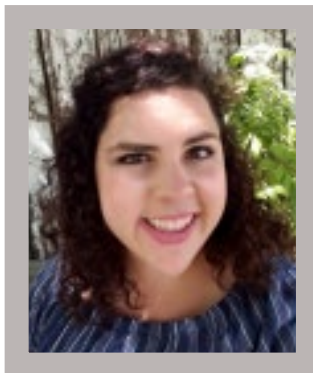


Joelle Jacobs

Vaccine and Outreach Manager

Joelle Jacobs has accepted a position in Emergency Response in Michigan. Her work history at the Dept. of Health began when she came to the Immunization Program as an intern while completing her degree. She has diligently worked her way up the ladder. She served as the Perinatal Hepatitis B Coordinator, and then she was promoted to her most recent position, Vaccine and Outreach Manager.

As the pandemic unfurled, Joelle stepped up to play a significant role in the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. As one of the managers in the Program, Joelle provided leadership in areas of the incident command structure where she responded to the immediate need during the pandemic. Her expertise and experience in these areas will be beneficial as she transitions to her newly accepted position. We wish Joelle the very best in her future endeavors and we'll miss her much in Santa Fe as part of the team.



NMIC 2022 Immunization Champions!

Anna Pentler, MPH, MBA
New Mexico Immunization Coalition

In December, we awarded four Immunization Champion awards to three individuals and one clinic:

Leslie Berry, RN, BSN, is a School Health Advocate with McKinley County Public Health Office. While always a champion for the health and safety of children, when COVID hit, she took a leadership role for vaccinating, setting up PODS and educating her community about the vaccine. Her relationships within the community, her experience and expertise in working with families and children made her a natural leader for COVID testing and immunization. She worked tirelessly with Navajo Nation partners, local health care facilities, city of Gallup and McKinley County partners to limit any missed opportunities to vaccinate. She is truly an immunization champion.

Angela Owens, RN, is the Nurse Supervisor for the SE Heights Public Health office and the Metro/NW Hepatitis Nurse for the Immunization Program. She also splits her time to assist our refugee health program, through this collaboration

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Community Outreach Efforts

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participated in at locations around the state.

SANTA ANA PUEBLO

Compliance Coordinator Scarlett Swanson tabled the Health Fair in Santa Ana Pueblo on October 21. The Pueblo of Santa Ana and Human Services Department held their Inaugural health fair at the Tamaya Wellness Center.

ROSWELL

On October 27, Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance Epidemiologist Veronica Rosales presented at the 2nd annual Southeast regions health update in Roswell.

HEAD TO TOE, ALBUQUERQUE

On November 16, Veronica Rosales presented at the annual Head to Toe conference at the Albuquerque



Convention Center. She presented on Increasing Vaccine Coverage Rates with the School Immunization Survey. Veronica also discussed the importance of vaccines and why we need to measure coverage rates regionally throughout the state to ensure health and safety among children and adolescents. Using school immunization data helps us display coverage rates throughout the state so we can best focus quality improvement and outreach efforts, to get those who are encountering barriers to get vaccinated. School Immunization surveys collect data at very specific age groups and areas, so we can get valid, real data. In the presentation she also discussed immunization law, school requirements, the new exemption policies, and other important information that relates to school immunization rates. Vaccine and Outreach Manager Joelle Jacobs tabled the Head to Toe conference to discuss vaccine updates with attendees.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON AGING, NATIONAL HISPANIC CULTURAL CENTER

On November 13-14, program staff attended the New Mexico 45th Annual Conference on Aging at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque.

The event was a success with a high turnout of attendance. Staff distributed numerous educational materials and provided vaccine updates to the attendees that visited the table.



Vaccine and Outreach Manager Joelle Jacobs at the Alamosa Community Health Fair on October 21

Joelle Jacobs and Adult Vaccine Manager Vanessa Hansel at the Aging and Long Term Services Conference



Immunization Health Educator Catherine Campbell and Joelle Jacobs at the City of Albuquerque Community Connections Resource Fair on December 13



SHOT BRIEFS

Edward Wake
CDC and Immunization Program

The First Approved Vaccine for Chikungunya

The US Food and Drug Administration on November 9 approved the first vaccine to prevent disease caused by the chikungunya virus.

Known as Ixchiq (manufactured by Valneva Austria GmbH), it is a live vaccine, requires only a single dose, and is approved for adults 18 years and older who are at an increased risk of exposure to the virus.

Chikungunya is a mosquito-borne disease (whose name in the Makonde dialect of Africa means “bending over in pain”) has no specific treatment and can be debilitating and even deadly for newborns. The most common symptoms of chikungunya include fever and joint pain. Other symptoms may include a rash, headache, and muscle pain. Some individuals may experience debilitating joint pain that persists for months or even years.

Health experts consider it to be an emerging threat to global health made worse by climate change, with at least 5 million cases in the past 15 years, although deaths and severe illness are rare, according to the

World Health Organization.

An Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) Work Group is currently reviewing the data on chikungunya vaccine and considering use of the vaccine for people in the United States at risk of chikungunya, including those who travel abroad, laboratory workers working with chikungunya virus, and residents of U.S. states and territories with, or at risk of, transmission.

More information on the vaccine’s approval can be found here: <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-approves-first-vaccine-prevent-disease-caused-chikungunya-virus>

Mpox Vaccine Now Available for VFC-Eligible Patients

On October 25, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices approved use of mpox vaccine for certain Vaccines for Children (VFC) program eligible at-risk patients and has added it to the list of vaccines currently available for order by providers.

Mpox (formerly known as monkeypox) is a rare disease caused by infection with the mpox virus. Monkeypox virus is part of the same family of viruses as variola virus, the virus that causes smallpox. Mpox symptoms are like smallpox symptoms, but milder, and mpox

is rarely fatal. Mpox is not related to chickenpox.

People with mpox often get a rash that may be located on hands, feet, chest, face, or mouth or near the genitals, including penis, testicles, labia, and vagina, and anus. The incubation period is 3-17 days. During this time, a person does not have symptoms and may feel fine.

- The rash will go through several stages, including scabs, before healing.
- The rash can initially look like pimples or blisters and may be painful or itchy.

Other symptoms of mpox can include:

- Fever
- Chills
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Exhaustion
- Muscle aches and backache
- Headache
- Respiratory symptoms (e.g., sore throat, nasal congestion, or cough)

Eligible groups are VFC patients who are children aged 18 years of age and at increased risk of mpox, including:

- Persons who are gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men, transgender or nonbinary people who in the past 6 months have had:
 - At least 1 sexually transmitted disease

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SHOT BRIEFS

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- More than 1 sex partner
- Sex at a commercial sex venue
- Sex in association with a large public event in a geographic area where mpox transmission is occurring
- Persons who are sexual contacts of the persons described above
- Persons who anticipate experiencing any of the situations described above

New Mexico VFC providers may obtain mpox vaccine as they would other vaccine products on NM Statewide Immunization Information System's vaccine ordering page.

Supply guidance for Nirsevimab RSV monoclonal antibody treatment

In October, the CDC issued a Health Alert Network Health Advisory to provide options for clinicians to protect infants from RSV due to a limited supply of nirsevimab.

Nirsevimab is a new treatment to protect infants against RSV approved by FDA and recommended by ACIP. However, the supply of this monoclonal antibody has outstripped demand, so CDC now

recommends prioritizing nirsevimab 100mg doses for infants at high risk for severe RSV disease: Infants <6 months and infants with underlying conditions that place them at highest risk for severe RSV. Recommendations for using 50mg doses remain unchanged. Avoid using two 50mg doses for infants weighing ≥ 11 lbs. to preserve supply of 50mg doses for infants weighing <11 lbs. Providers, be aware that insurers may not cover the cost of two 50mg doses.

CDC recommends providers suspend using nirsevimab in palivizumab-eligible children ages 8–19 months during this RSV season. These children should receive palivizumab per AAP recommendations. Also, continue offering nirsevimab to American Indian and Alaska Native children 8–19 months who are not palivizumab-eligible and who live in remote regions, where transporting children with severe RSV for medical care is challenging, or in communities with high rates of RSV in infants and toddlers.

Prenatal care providers, discuss nirsevimab supply concerns when counseling pregnant people about RSVpreF vaccine (Abrysvo, Pfizer), as maternal vaccination is effective and will reduce the number of infants requiring nirsevimab.

School Requirements 2024-2025

Anna Pentler, MPH, MBA
NM Immunization Coalition

The Vaccine Advisory Group met on November 17 to review the current NM School and childcare Immunization



Requirements. This group meets annually, reviews the current data, discusses any changes or additions to the requirements and makes thoughtful recommendations to the NMDOH Cabinet Secretary.

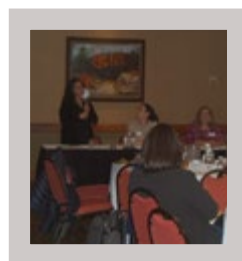
Official School Requirements are set by the NMDOH Cabinet Secretary and are usually published in late January. This

gives school nurses plenty of time to alert parents of any new requirements that students may need.

This year there are some minor rollup changes, but no new vaccines have been added for the upcoming school year. Even though the 2024-25 requirements haven't yet been officially published, please [mark this page](#) to access the requirements.

Photo Gallery

December meeting photos



NMIC December meeting

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and boys through the use of a web-based app to educate about HPV related cancers and the vaccine. Use of the VacTeens app compared with usual and customary education improved uptake significantly. We hope that the app will soon be available for wider use.

Captain Wil Darwin with Indian Health Service presented information about health equity and the efforts that IHS undertook to get Native American populations in NM vaccinated against COVID-19.

After lunch, the group heard about the NMDOH's "Don't Wait—Vaccinate!" marketing campaign and the statewide Better Together projects. Better Together funds many projects to promote immunizations; we heard from Quay County, which has some excellent and innovative video projects, and from Generation Justice, where youth educate other youth through radio, podcasts, social media and more. It was great to hear about young adults being involved in public health, and in vaccines in particular!

Our last presenters were the Chair Care project, also part of Better Together. Chair Care trains trusted messengers, Hair Stylists, on how to talk to their clients about vaccines. Anna Rutins with Presbyterian gave an overview of the project, Camille Velarde gave an update on the evaluation of the project, and Brian Serna gave an introduction to how the Hair Stylists are trained in Motivational Interviewing. Two Stylists, James Torres and Mylette Clark, were part of the panel and gave first-hand impressions of how the project is going and what motivates them to participate. The panel was lively and fresh and gave the audience a memorable presentation.

NMIC is going strong after many years, and we hope to be around for another 21!



Immunization Champions

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Angela identified a gap in immunizations for adult refugees. Angela then created an Adult



Immunization Initiative which is a collaboration between NMDOH and commercial pharmacies to ensure that

patients receive quality care close to home. Angela and her team strive to ensure immigrants have all their vaccination needs completed correctly and accurately. She and her team members have great follow through, professionalism, and extreme compassion for their patients.

Julie Weston is the Executive Administrator of the New Mexico Pharmacists Association. Julie has organized and co-trained over 1,000 New Mexico pharmacy technicians to give vaccines for New Mexicans. She continues to organize



trainings and maintains a large number of files so the pharmacy technician immunization program is successful in our state. None of the pharmacy technicians would be trained if not for Julie and her excellent organizational abilities. We are truly grateful for her commitment to ensuring more New Mexicans have accessibility to vaccinators in the community pharmacy settings.

Presbyterian Medical Group Rio Rancho Pediatrics is an exemplary group of providers and staff. The VFC coordinators ensure the staff receives up-to-date education regarding current and new vaccines, and how to approach the current culture of vaccine hesitancy. They do "Lunch and Learn" presentations to discuss various topics regarding



immunizations. The office clearly outlines how team members can help close care gaps concerning vaccinations. They have a robust outreach program through the Nurse Care Management team that identifies patients who are due for immunizations and schedules visits to complete the vaccines. The nursing and rooming staff provide families with vaccine information and answer patients' questions. Their latest work focuses on adolescent vaccines and getting health maintenance alerts to fire for the Men B vaccine to avoid missed opportunities. The Presbyterian Rio Rancho Pediatric clinic is focused on keeping patients healthy and vaccinated.

Thanks to all our Champions who keep our communities safe from vaccine-preventable diseases!

Contact us

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