

# NCCDPHP Success Story

## School HPV Immunization Clinics Increase Vaccination Rates in North Dakota

*By Janna Pastir*

### Public Health Challenge

Access to health care in many of North Dakota's rural areas is limited. In 2012, some of these counties had low rates of completed HPV vaccination series—as low as 10%. The vaccine is less protective against HPV-associated cancers when the series of three shots is not completed.



### At A Glance

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends adolescents aged 11 to 12 get vaccinated against human papillomavirus (HPV) to reduce their risk for HPV-related cancers later in life. For many rural North Dakota counties, public health units are the only immunization providers. By partnering with rural middle and high schools, local public health staff were able to improve access to HPV vaccinations for this underserved population. As a result, HPV vaccination rates increased, protecting more people from HPV-associated cancers.

### Approach

Partnering with local public health units, the North Dakota Comprehensive Cancer Control Program (ND CCCP) implemented an in-school vaccination program. Unvaccinated middle and high school students or those who had not completed the entire HPV vaccine series took advantage of programs offered in their schools. This innovative approach aligned with ND CCCP's priority to protect the population from HPV infection, as well as the state's goal to increase HPV vaccination rates by eliminating barriers to preventive services for adolescents. Collaborating partners used local newspapers, radio, and movie theaters to increase community awareness about the program.

*Walsh County began using school-based HPV vaccination clinics in 2013. Using this approach in their schools, we increased the HPV vaccination rate from 47% to 60%.*

- Deb Anderson, RN (retired), Walsh Cty. District Health

## Results

From 2013 to 2017, public health units in four North Dakota rural counties launched school clinics in 20 middle and high schools to provide HPV vaccinations to students during school hours. As a result, parents did not have to take time away from work to get their children vaccinated. Walk-ins at the local public health units also decreased, allowing staff to work more effectively and efficiently. Each of the four public health units met or exceeded their first-year goal of increasing the completion rate of the HPV vaccination series by 10%. Walsh County increased rates by 15% in Year 1 and by 18% in Year 2. In addition, program participants learned about vaccine safety, effectiveness, and the types of cancer prevented by the HPV vaccine.

## What's Next

The successful Walsh County school-based HPV immunization program became self-sustaining in 3 years. Using best practices and lessons learned from this program, the ND CCCP is developing and will disseminate a guidance document for implementing a HPV vaccination program using school immunization clinics. This document will provide information and technical assistance to enable all rural public health units in North Dakota to create HPV vaccination programs using in-school immunization clinics.

## Find Out More

Local public health units in North Dakota continue to work with school immunization clinics to increase access to HPV vaccinations. For information on HPV vaccination, visit

<https://www.cdc.gov/hpv/parents/vaccine.html>.

(<https://www.cdc.gov/hpv/parents/vaccine.html>) To learn more about the North Dakota Comprehensive Cancer Control Program, go to

<http://www.ndhealth.gov/compcancer/>.

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## Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

### Web site

<http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/>

(<http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/>)

### CDC-INFO

<https://wwwn.cdc.gov/dcs/ContactUs/Form>

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The findings and conclusions in this success story are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the funding agencies or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).



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