



West Virginia Adolescent Immunization Project

The “**Take Your Best Shot: WV Adolescent Immunization Project**” was developed to address the problem associated with low vaccination rates among adolescents throughout West Virginia. It is envisioned that the WV Adolescent Immunization Project will be implemented statewide, with region by region support of local, community-based foundations throughout the state.

The “**Take Your Best Shot: WV Adolescent Immunization Project**” targets West Virginia’s adolescents ages 11 to 21 years, and strives to increase the rate of immunizations for the following vaccines:

- Tetanus, Diphtheria, Acellular Pertussis
- Hepatitis B
- Varicella
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella
- Influenza
- Meningococcal
- Human Papillomavirus

The Adolescent Immunization Project focuses its work on four “levels of influence” that evidence has indicated are effective in changing the behaviors of adolescents. The four program components were developed to work synergistically to positively impact immunization rates for adolescents over the proposed three year period: These levels of influence are:

- Family/Adolescents
- Peers/School System
- Healthcare Providers
- Community/Policy & Practices

The project also includes interventions developed to ensure that the increased immunization rates among adolescents are sustainable once funding for the project ends. Thus, in addition to interventions designed to educate and promote awareness among parents, adolescents, school officials, healthcare providers and other community leaders, **this component is essential to promote the adoption of policies and practices that will retain the increased rate of adolescent immunization rates after funding ends.**

Why: The state immunization program is beginning to collect epidemiological data throughout the state. In counties where the data has been collected, the rate of adolescents who have received the recommended immunizations is below the national averages. As this baseline data continues to be compiled, the need for the WV Adolescent Immunization Project can be best expressed by a review of clinical case examples:

- 29 day old baby dies from whooping cough in West Virginia last year. The baby boy was born healthy, but in less than two weeks developed whooping cough that was transmitted from the baby's 19 year old mother. The baby was too young to have been vaccinated, but the mother could have been vaccinated.
- Freshman female basketball player at Virginia Tech contracts meningitis. Although she did not die, she did lose both hands and feet, thus her life was forever changed. Following this incident the wait lines for the meningitis vaccine lasted for days at the school health services.
- November 14, 2006 the Associated Press reports that seventeen West Virginia University students have been advised to take precautionary measures, including antibiotics, after an exposure to meningitis. The 20 year-old brother of a fellow student was being treated at the WVU Hospital for meningococcal meningitis.
- A mumps epidemic began in Iowa early in 2005 and then quickly spread to several more Midwestern states. The disease was first seen at a college in Dubuque and may have been brought by students returning from England, where mumps is endemic. According to the medical journal, *Family Practice News*, in November 2006, the outbreak totals 5,824 cases in 45 states --and isn't over yet.

Center for Rural Health Development, Inc. (Center):

Since its formation in 1994, the Center has been at the forefront in West Virginia focusing on innovative solutions to health care challenges. With the theme, "promoting sustainable solutions for a healthy West Virginia," the Center has worked to develop and implement a variety of programs that work to improve access to health care services in rural, underserved areas of West Virginia, as well as to improve the health of our citizens. The Center provides a neutral forum in which consumers, health care providers, community and business leaders and policy makers can come together to share information and enhance understanding leading to the best solutions to address the health and health care needs in West Virginia.

West Virginia Immunization Network (WIN):

WIN works in partnership with the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health's Immunization Program. WIN and the WV Immunization Program work together increase immunization rates and reduce death, illness and disability associated with vaccine-preventable diseases. As the private partner to the State, WIN strives to bring added value to the WV Immunization Program's scope of work by mobilizing private sector and local immunization coalitions.