Oral Presentation
National Association of County and City Health Officials’ (NACCHO) 2017 National Assessment of Local Health Department Immunization Programs
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Background:
Local Health Departments (LHD) serve a vital function in the community, and often act as safety nets in providing essential healthcare services. According to NACCHO’s 2016 National Profile of Local Health Departments, adult (90%) and child (88%) immunizations are clinical services most often provided by LHDs. To further explore LHD immunization program activities, NACCHO, with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Association of Immunization Managers (AIM), conducted the 2017 National Assessment of Local Health Department Immunization Programs.

Objectives:
This assessment examined the functions of immunization programs at the LHD level, and characterized their activities to control vaccine preventable diseases (VPD) and provide immunization services.

Methods:
Assessment questions captured aspects of LHD immunization programs including: structure, funding, policies, health education and outreach, immunization services, VPD investigation, and the use of immunization information systems. Assessment participants were ascertained from NACCHO’s LHD database, and were recruited through AIM’s assistance. Via email, a statistically representative sample of 2,238 LHDs located throughout the US received the assessment. The assessment was in the field from October through November 2017. NACCHO generated statistics using Microsoft Excel and SPSS.

Results:
517 (23%) participants completed the survey. Most respondents (33%) were from small jurisdictions serving a population of 25,000 people or less. Half of the respondents (50%) were from jurisdictions that served between 25,001 and 249,999 persons. Respondents also self-classified themselves as to jurisdiction type – 19% urban, 24% suburban, and 57% rural. About 86% of respondents indicated that their LHD employed 1 or more FTEs to provide immunization services.

Conclusion:
Assessment results will be used to further inform immunization program activities, identify best practices of high performing immunization programs, and advocate for additional federal resources to support state and local immunization program functions.
Oral Presentation
Creating a Pipeline of Vaccine Experts: The American Academy of Family Physicians Vaccine Science Fellowship
Margot Savoy, Bellinda Schoof, Pamela Carter-Smith, Jennifer Frost, Julie Wood

Background:
The Vaccine Science Fellowship was created in 2009 to develop a cadre of Family Physicians interested in and knowledgeable about vaccines and vaccine policy. The overall goals of the program included increasing use of immunizations, effectively communicating vaccine safety, and encouraging public acceptance of vaccines.

Setting:
Part-time fellowship program leveraging in-person and telecommunication strategies to provide mentorship and on-going education with an electronic after-care platform for on-going communication and growth.

Population:
Family Physicians with a self-identified interest in vaccine science

Project Description:
Two AAFP members are selected annually to participate in a one-year program. Fellows gain knowledge and practical hands-on experience with vaccine policy through participation in meetings with leading experts in public health and immunizations, federal and state vaccine policy groups, and vaccine manufacturers. The fellows serve as a bridge between the public health community and the family physician community to make vaccine information effective and practical to AAFP members and by assisting the Academy in providing effective input into the deliberations and decisions of federal and state public health agencies that set vaccine policy. They also serve to educate practicing family physicians about vaccine advances.

Results/Lessons Learned:
Overall the program has been successful graduating 18 fellows most of whom have expanded their vaccine work following the experience. While most fellows went on to be a local or state-wide advocate, a few were able to provide national impact through service to the AAFP, ACIP, NVAC or similar organizations. Past fellows have multiple publications including a textbook released in 2017. Opportunities for improvement were identified including additional training in GRADE, more opportunities to participate in and lead post-fellowship opportunities and considering restructuring the fellowship to leverage technology better so additional fellows could be trained.