



# Improving Influenza Vaccine Access, Equity and Promotion in Community Health Centers

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# THE NACHC MISSION

## America's Voice for Community Health Care

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) was founded in 1971 to promote efficient, high quality, comprehensive health care that is accessible, culturally and linguistically competent, community directed, and patient centered for all.

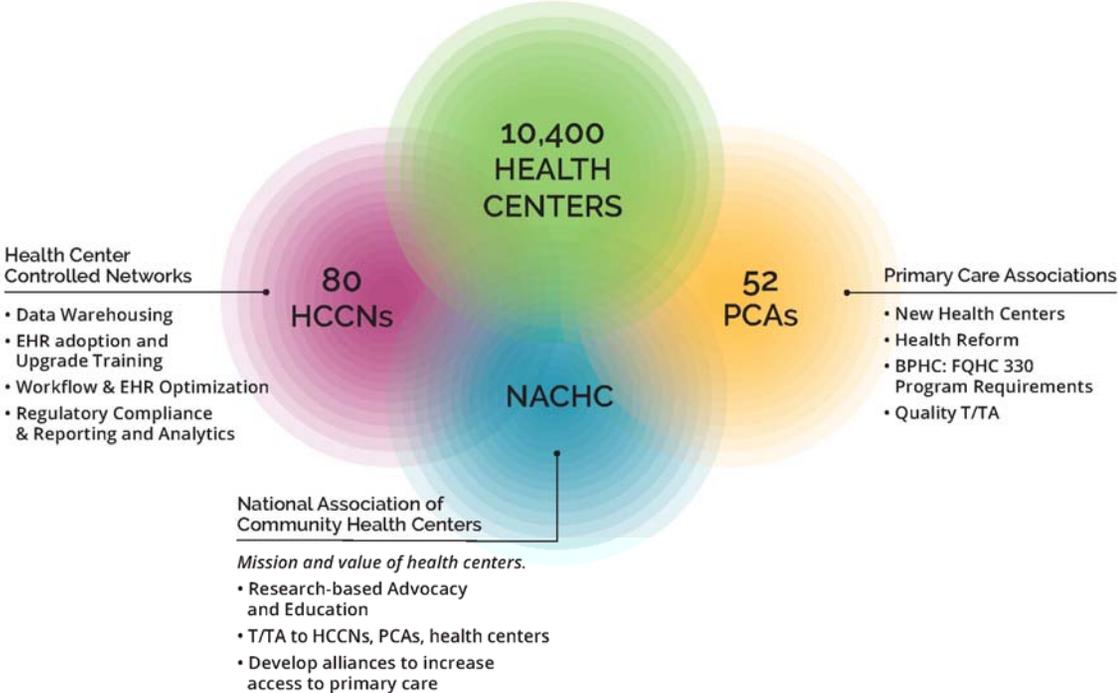


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# Disclosure

This speaker has no conflicts of interest

# The NACHC + Community Health Center Infrastructure



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# Health Centers

## INCLUDE:

- Community Health Centers
- Health Care for the Homeless Centers
- Migrant Health Centers
- Primary Care Programs in Public Housing
- School-based Health Centers

*Each health center is an independent, 501(c)(3), non-profit*

*Note: Health Center Boards are made up of 51% patients*

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# Voices from the Field

- Director of Nursing at a health center in southern Georgia
- Bridge between her community and the health center
- Serves as
  - *Director* → *Coordinates care*
  - *Messenger and Educator*
  - *Comforter* → *Trauma informed care*

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# Approaches by Providers

## January-June 2021

Escalating efforts to attain, provide and advance vaccine access

Facing vaccine hesitancy, surplus of immunizations and closure of pop-up clinics

## June to present 2021

Incorporating vaccine mandates; addressing continued hesitancy

Anticipating boosters, pediatric vaccination, while

Leaders have had to digest and disseminate accurate information on COVID-19 infection and prevention even as eligibility and vaccine product shifted from week to week.

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# New Approaches

## Pharmacists

- Passage of amendments to the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act allowed an expansion of who could be defined as an immunization provider
- Pharmacy technicians responded quickly to achieve certification as immunizers
- Pharmacists were often the logistical lead for the various immunization efforts

## Extenders (CHWs, Navigators, etc)

- Arming extenders with vaccine knowledge has led to increase outreach and connection
- Mobile units have been used throughout both urban and rural areas to meet the patients where they are

## All Hands on Deck

- Involving every type of staff member throughout the organization, not just clinical
- i.e. IT staff doing data entry, admin staff leading on logistics

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# Large Scale Immunization Clinics

CHCs partner with public health entities to provide the community at large with access to immunizations

## Best practices:

- Coordinate early and often
- Documentation/data entry
- Connection to continued care

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# Data!

- CHCs used their EHR and IIS systems to identify patients most at risk—first for testing then for immunization
- Population health management continues to be a crucial activity, using both primary and secondary data to risk stratify
- Making strides, with public health, on multi-jurisdiction immunization data

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# Listening and Co-Design (*Messaging Matters*)

Health centers engage individuals in a co-design process to create trusted vaccine messages for local communities

Patients and staff participate in co-design conversations to help answer questions related to vaccine trust and share their ideas on how to talk about vaccines in ways that connect with and honor the community

Patients and staff receive information needed to make vaccine choices that are right for them

Health centers receive a message repository and toolkit specific to their community

Health centers gain experience in co-design

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# Biggest Co-Design AHA's

- Staff and Patient trauma
- Staff resistance
- Mandatory vaccination
- “It’s not all about COVID” during the visit
- Introduction of complexity of kids/family vaccination
- Identified staff and patient ambassadors

# Narratives Themes Ranked: Unvaccinated Patients and Staff

Mandatory Vaccination

Seal of Approval from FDA

Information is Constantly Changing

Public Health Strategies Change

The long-term effects of  
vaccination vs long-term effects of  
COVID infection

Concerns of Generational Impact:  
Children and Pregnant Women

Religious Concerns

*Note: Staff are a mirror of the communities they serve and are often health center patients themselves*

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# Key Takeaways

- Community health staff have continued to be innovative and remained a trusted entity in the community
- As flu season begins, those key activities of community assessment and need, outreach, scope/role innovation, useful data, and patient co-design will remain crucial
- This is the year of healing



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