

Breaking Down Barriers for Immunizations

Issue

When parents work six or seven days a week, it is difficult for them to take their children into a health clinic to get vaccinated. This was the experience for many immigrant families in Mason County, Washington. As a result, schools in Mason County started to see a rise in students who were not immunized and didn't have access to medical care. Calls from school nurses poured into the Mason County Public Health Department with concerns about the risk non-immunized students posed to themselves, to other students, and to the whole community.

Intervention

In 2007, the Mason County Public Health Department took action and used Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant funds to open an immunization clinic for children. They set up back-to-school clinics during evening hours and partnered with the Migrant Worker Liaison which provided parent education. This partnership proved very successful. Over 50 percent of children from immigrant families seen at the immunization clinic were brought in by the Migrant Worker Liaison.

Impact

This program had a huge impact on families, especially those with no health insurance. Not only did children receive appropriate immunizations, the Mason County Health Department was also able to connect families with other community and health resources in Mason County. Immunizations were provided to 309 children through this program, including 77 children from immigrant families.

Because of block grant funds, the Mason County Health Department was able to help more families overcome barriers to keeping their children safe from vaccine-preventable illness.

County population*: 54,600

Mason County Public Health Department
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<http://www.co.mason.wa.us/health/index.php>

