Using innovative communication approaches to boost HPV vaccination rates

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Background

Each year in the U.S., 14 million people are infected with human papillomavirus (HPV), and 27,000 people are diagnosed with an HPV-related cancer. The HPV vaccine prevents nearly all types of HPV that cause cancer and is recommended at age 11 or 12. However vaccination rates for HPV lag far behind rates for other adolescent vaccinations. Parents may be unaware that three doses of the HPV vaccine are needed in early adolescence and that both boys and girls should be vaccinated.

Primary care-based intervention

At Group Health Cooperative, an integrated health care delivery system based in Seattle, HPV vaccination rates are below the national target of 80%. To address this gap, the Group Health Foundation and Group Health Research Institute (GHRI) developed a pilot HPV vaccine communication strategy for parents of 11 to 12 year olds to increase immunization rates in seven of Group Health’s 26 primary care clinics and boost HPV vaccine awareness through social media.

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— Group Health clinic staff

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— Deborah L. Wesler, MD
Executive Director, Immunization Action Coalition

“‘I’ve tried to show [the video] to people involved in vaccination any time I get a chance. If the right person eventually sees and spreads this, it could really explode…’”
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Assistant Medical Director, Preventive Care
Group Health Cooperative

Music video: “Get HPV Vaccine”

• 90-second music video to boost public awareness
• Directed and produced by GHRI’s in-house videographer
• Launched November 10, 2015
• Cost: $13,500 (plus minimal “in-kind” contribution)

Two key messages

• The HPV vaccine prevents cancer in both boys and girls.
• Three doses are needed starting at age 11-12.

Diverse, in-house artists

• To keep costs down, we recruited a diverse mix of GHRI staff, including a songwriter, musicians, vocalists, and a sound engineer.

Key steps in the process

• Songwriter and lead vocalist developed rough mix of the song, which serves as the framework for the video
• Videographer created a storyboard with potential images
• Used original art created by kids age 11-12, simple animation, and design elements from the primary care-based intervention
• Selected a short, easy-to-remember URL: www.hpvshot.org
• Shared widely on social media

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