

District Attorney—Local Health Department School Visitation Program

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Background

In 2005, the City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) estimated the childhood immunization rates in the City of Milwaukee to be less than fifty percent. Preliminary review determined that the MHD, on its own, was not successful in persuading parents and the school district to address the City's poor immunization rates. Wisconsin State Statutes give the District Attorney's Office (DA) the authority to oversee and enforce immunization compliance in schools and childcare centers^{1,2}. The DA recognized the strong connection between public health issues, crime, and the overall well-being of the community. Subsequently, a DA-MHD school visitation program was developed and implemented in 2005. The collaboration between the DA (with its enforcement tools, knowledge of state laws, and ability to prosecute) and the MHD (with its medical expertise, data collection capabilities, and ability to vaccinate) provided an effective combination to successfully address the low immunization rates in Milwaukee schools.

Setting

Milwaukee
Schools

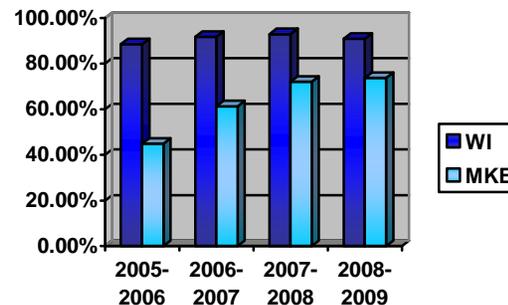
Population

School-aged
children

Project Description

School visitations were a grass roots effort to better understand the hurdles faced by parents, the school district, and individual schools in complying with state mandated immunization requirements. Schools were selected from different geographic areas of the city and reflected a diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic group of children. Each school, while having some common challenges, also had its own unique hurdles. The DA and MHD developed a rapport and on-going relationship with each school offering services tailored to meet the specific needs of each individual school.

Outcome: 50% increase in Milwaukee immunization rates in 4 years¹



References

¹ State of Wisconsin 2009-2010 School Immunization Laws Booklet

² Chapter 252.04, Wisconsin State Statutes

Results/ Lessons Learned

- Overall immunization compliance rate improvement: 44.9% (2005) to 73.8% (2009)¹.
- An on-going effort of the DA, in conjunction with the MHD, to implement school immunization compliance provided powerful synergies to achieve and maintain immunization rates that could not otherwise be attained had either agency acted alone.