



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

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Office of Public Health and Science

National Vaccine Program Office
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RE: NVAC - September 26-27, 2006 meeting

Dear Dr. Agwunobi:

I greatly appreciate that time you have regularly taken out of your schedule to meet with me and Dr. Gellin to help shape the Committee's agenda. I would particularly like to thank you for your participation during our last meeting. I know the new members, The Honorable Dr. Calvin Johnson, Dr. Laura Riley, and Dr. Mark Feinberg, as well as outgoing member Dr. David Johnson, were very appreciative of your kind words of welcome and thanks, respectively.

We had a very full agenda at our last meeting, starting with Dr. Benjamin Schwartz's overview of the Unmet Needs program. He described the process used to evaluate program outcomes, discussed last year's projects, and presented the work of a committee examining how to modify the program to improve its effectiveness. He noted that the National Vaccine Program Office (NVPO) will be interested in receiving proposals and projects that are consistent with the new priority categories designed so that funding can be optimized.

Dr. Jeffrey A. Kelman of the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare then discussed vaccine reimbursement and methods for increasing vaccine penetration among adults and children. Dr. Guthrie Birkhead subsequently provided the Committee with an update on the early progress of the NVAC Vaccine Finance Working Group, having just had their first in-person meeting the prior afternoon. Dr. Birkhead's presentation focused on vaccine financing stresses, the pediatric immunization delivery system, and reimbursement issues. Since the meeting, the working group has continued establishing its focus and understanding the broad systemic scope of the US public and private vaccine financing system. Moreover, they are identifying gaps in information where more data need to be collected and mapping out the broad picture of vaccine financing. This will help them to focus on which portions of the system to address and how to find solutions to these problems.

Dr. Sharon G. Humiston then introduced Ms. Joanne Yarwood, who is Head of the Immunisation Information Team of the United Kingdom (UK) Department of Health. Ms. Yarwood discussed the extensive parental survey program they undertake on a biannual basis in support of strategic planning of their communication efforts.

After Ms. Yarwood's presentation, Ms. Savolia Spottswood, Senior Manager of Vaccines, Pharmacy, and Biologics for America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP), discussed the purpose and the content of AHIP's Emerging Vaccines Chart. Dr. Lance Rodewald, of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) then spoke on implementing new vaccines and vaccine recommendations through CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the Vaccines for Children initiatives. He discussed how States obtain the financial resources required to implement these programs, and he also stressed the need for timely Federal and private sector support of vaccine initiatives since biotechnology advances are dramatically increasing the number of available vaccines. Dr. Rodewald further noted that, in addition to the work being undertaken by the newly formed NVAC Vaccine Financing Working Group, the American Academy of Pediatricians Immunization Task Force is also working on identifying possible solutions to the immunization financing dilemma.

The Committee then heard presentations from State and local perspectives. Dr. Poki S. Namkung, President of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and Ms. Claire Hannan, Executive Director of the Association of Immunization Managers (AIM), both addressed human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine implementation. Dr. Namkung discussed NACCHO efforts to encourage members to better communicate and implement HPV vaccines while educating their at-risk populations. She noted that some key barriers include vaccine expense and difficulty reaching higher risk female adolescents who reside in communities opposed to immunization mandates. Ms. Hannan stated that AIM represents 64 immunization projects that receive funding through CDC's section 317 grants. She noted problems with financing and infrastructure support for HPV implementation plans and added that many States have no full-time adolescent immunization staff. Both presentations emphasized the need to seek funds from multiple sources while adding that collaboration with schools is necessary to reach the high-risk female population. Dr. Calvin Johnson addressed State health agency perspectives pertaining to new vaccine implementation in his presentation. He stated that immunization is a key issue for the Association of State and Territorial Health Organizations (ASTHO), which works with ACIP to ensure effective vaccination dissemination. Dr. Johnson addressed financing concerns articulated by Dr. Namkung and Ms. Hannan, indicating that States' vaccine program funding is limited even though costs continue to increase.

The second day opened with agency and advisory committee updates from the Committee's ex-officio members. The four NVAC Subcommittees then presented summaries of their meetings.

Dr. Cornelia Dekker and Dr. Jerome O. Klein reported on the meeting of the Subcommittee on Vaccine Development and Supply. Dr. Klein's discussion of the influenza vaccine supply was informed by presentations made to the Subcommittee by the manufacturers and Dr. Jeanne Santoli (CDC). Dr. Dekker's report on vaccine development included highlights from manufacturer presentations that outlined their ongoing adjuvant research and informed the discussion of dose optimization strategies to enhance vaccine delivery. Dr. Dekker also stated that the Subcommittee is planning to produce an article to make this information available to the general medical public, which they hope to have published in a nationally recognized medical journal.

Dr. Humiston, Chair of the Public Engagement and Communication Subcommittee, shared with the Committee communication materials developed by the Health Resources and Services Administration to address a need for better communication about childhood immunization. She also made several recommendations for potential Unmet Needs Programs addressing communication issues that she will report to the Unmet Needs Working Group.

Dr. Alan R. Hinman, reporting on the meeting of the Subcommittee on Immunization Coverage, stated that immunization registries (or vaccine registries) are now referred to as immunization information systems. Dr. Hinman then discussed the history of registries and the goals of the *Healthy People 2010* initiative. Dr. Hinman is currently working with the Committee to finalize an update to the Committee's December 2000 progress report on the Committee's 1999 report entitled "*Development of Community- and State-Based Immunization Registries.*"

Dr. Andrew Pavia, in his summary of the Subcommittee on Vaccine Safety meeting, focused on the recently published Institute of Medicine (IOM) report on drug safety entitled "*The Future of Drug Safety: Promoting and Protecting the Health of the Public.*" Dr. Pavia stated that although there is no crisis in vaccine safety currently, the IOM report resulted in noteworthy conclusions that the Committee may wish to keep in mind when reviewing an inventory of the Department's activities regarding vaccine safety, currently being prepared by the NVPO.

Following the Subcommittee reports, there were a series of influenza reports. Dr. Santoli addressed supply, distribution tracking activities, and communication of seasonal influenza vaccines. She also reported on meeting outcomes from the National Influenza Vaccine Summit in June by describing plans to increase utilization rates for the 2006-07 season.

Dr. Barbara Mulach, of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases NIH/HHS, reported on seasonal and pandemic influenza research activities. She discussed the Influenza Genome Project, the Centers for Excellence for Influenza Research and Surveillance initiative, influenza antiviral current and planned programs, and challenges to pandemic vaccine development and availability.

Ms. Patricia Kurtz, Director of Federal Relations for the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), addressed influenza vaccinations for healthcare workers in an effort to reduce transmission. After providing background information, she described the latest JCAHO standards being implemented (along with corresponding dates for compliance) as well as new elements of performance.

After a final request for discussion and public comment, the meeting was adjourned.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have in regard to any of the Committee's activities. The next NVAC meeting is scheduled for February 6-7, 2007. I hope you will be able to join us.

Sincerely yours,



Gary L. Freed, MD, MPH
Chair, National Vaccine Advisory Committee