

IMMUNIZATION GRANT PROGRAM (SECTION 317) WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

Approximately 42,000 adults and 308 children in the United States die annually from vaccine-preventable diseases or their complications¹. Despite high immunization coverage levels for preschool-aged children, pockets of need remain. Most children served with Section 317-funded vaccines are under-insured or their parents cannot afford the out-of-pocket costs required to fully vaccinate their children. The majority of Section 317 program funds are dedicated to routine childhood programs, with a smaller portion remaining for adolescent and adult immunization programs. Adult vaccination levels remain considerably lower than childhood levels, and among adults, racial and ethnic disparities exist.

The 317 program also provides immunization infrastructure which is crucial, especially when public health priorities can shift rapidly in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease or a bioterrorism event.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

The Section 317 program is a discretionary federal grant program to all states, 6 cities, territories and protectorates which provides vaccines to underinsured children and adolescents not served by the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, and as funding permits to uninsured and underinsured adults.

The Section 317 Operations program remains the primary source of funding for most jurisdictional vaccine program operations. Section 317 operations funding supports activities that (1) direct public vaccine provision, (2) oversee provider quality by conducting assessments, training programs, and compliance monitoring, (3) develop immunization registries, (4) support school-based and community-based vaccine service delivery programs, (5) create and deliver consumer information, (6) conduct vaccine-preventable disease surveillance, and (7) conduct population needs assessments. Funds also support the perinatal hepatitis B prevention program.

The nation's childhood immunization coverage rates are at high levels for every vaccine and for vaccination series measures. As childhood immunization coverage rates increase, cases of vaccine preventable diseases decline significantly. According to 2005 National Immunization Survey data, there is no statistically significant difference in immunization rates between black and white children nationwide, although pockets of low coverage continue to exist.

An economic evaluation of the impact of seven vaccines (DTaP, Td, Hib, polio, MMR, hepatitis B, and varicella) routinely given as part of the childhood immunization schedule found that the vaccines are cost-effective. Routine childhood vaccination with these seven vaccines prevent over 14 million cases of disease and over 33,500 deaths over the lifetime of children born in any given year, and result in an annual cost savings of \$10 billion in direct medical costs and over \$40 billion in indirect societal costs.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS

A CDC will continue to work with federal, state, and local partners to build support for immunizations, including adult immunizations, increase vaccination coverage levels, particularly for adolescents, educate parents and providers about the importance of vaccination in general, and address pockets of need where there are substantial numbers of under-vaccinated groups.

In 2005 and 2006 there was an unprecedented number of new vaccines and vaccine recommendations including: Tetanus-diphtheria-acellular pertussis (Tdap) for adolescents, a universal hepatitis A recommendation, rotavirus for infants, an expansion of the annual influenza recommendation to include all children 6 to 59 months of age, human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine for adolescent females, and a herpes zoster (shingles) vaccine for adults over 60 years of age. CDC and the Section 317 program are working to

educate the public and providers about these new recommendations in order to reach as many recommended individuals as possible.

¹These estimates do not include deaths related to HPV related cancers.

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