



State/Territory Report

State/Territory: Arkansas

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Projects/Issues Addressed This Year:

1. On February 17, 2009, Act 180 was signed by Governor Beebe, raising the tobacco excise tax to allow funding for several statewide health initiatives. One of the initiatives was to provide funding to purchase influenza vaccine for all public school students in Arkansas. The Governor asked the health department to make it happen, so we immediately began planning to go into every school statewide the coming fall. Then H1N1 arose and in August we decided the best way to protect the most people was to give H1N1 vaccine to the school children. Going into all the schools took three months plus each county held two mass flu clinics for the public. In total we have given 382,000 doses of seasonal and 271,000 doses of H1N1 flu so far. That's a total of 651,874 doses of vaccine given in activities planned and implemented by PHN's. Of course we used a lot of volunteers!
2. We are currently going back into the schools to give Tdap vaccine to 6th graders who must, due to a new state law, have a second dose of pertussis before they start school this fall.
3. The Arkansas Department of Health applied to our Arkansas Nurses Association and was granted approved provider status for nursing continuing education. Most of the continuing education we have been providing to school and hospital nurses, as well as our own staff, will soon be ANCC-COA approved.
4. We are working with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences to implement telemedicine in many of the health units. We are currently conducting in seven local health units high risk consultations for maternity patients and colposcopy services for our Family Planning patients who are unable to travel to Little Rock for these services.

Projects/Issues Pending:

1. Planning to give the flu vaccine again in schools this fall.
2. Working on automating the flu clinic data collection – a nurse and clerk will work as a team to scan drivers' licenses and insurance cards and electronically enter the vaccination data into a database. This database will be uploaded into our immunization registry and can also produce at the push of a button the reports that we spent so many hours on last fall.
3. As Health Care Reform rolls out, we are trying to determine what our agency's response will be. We are planning to begin a nurse home visiting program (the Olds Model) and are also discussing chronic disease screening and case management in coordination with local physicians, both on a small scale initially. Participation in an HIE is also on the table.