

For Immediate Release
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National Immunization Awareness Month: How Does the Coachella Valley Stack Up?

Palm Desert, CA (August 16, 2017) — August is National Immunization Awareness Month, an observance designed to raise awareness about the importance of vaccinations, and a great opportunity to examine the state of immunizations in the Coachella Valley. Local nonprofit HARC, Inc. (Health Assessment and Research for Communities) provides an in-depth look into the state of immunization in our region.

Immunization is the process where a person is made immune or resistant to an infectious disease by administering a vaccine. This vaccine stimulates a person's immune system to protect her or him against disease. The World Health Organization estimates that immunization prevents between 2 and 3 million deaths per year.

Children and Immunizations

Young children should receive immunizations on a regular schedule in order to protect them against more than a dozen preventable diseases, says the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Here in the Coachella Valley, most parents follow these immunization schedules with ease, as illustrated by HARC's local data.

Specifically, most parents of young children (ages 5 and under) find immunization schedules easy to understand (88.7%) and have doctors or clinics who regularly remind them when it's time for their child's vaccination (77.2%).

However, 24.3% of local parents of young children—nearly 7,000 parents—say that they need help with immunization services in the Coachella Valley. Thus, it's clear that services designed to educate and assist parents of young children with vaccinations are an important part of a healthy Coachella Valley community.

Adults and Immunizations

Vaccines are not just for children. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that all adults get the influenza (flu) vaccine each year. However, HARC's research demonstrates that only 43.9% of Coachella Valley adults have had a flu vaccine in the past year, a rate far lower than recommended. Additionally, some sub-groups have even lower rates of vaccinations—for example, only about a third of

Hispanic/Latino adults have had a flu vaccine in the past year. Rates are also low for young adults and those with low education levels. Clearly, education and outreach are needed in order to increase flu vaccination levels in these populations, thereby protecting not only the people who get the vaccines but also those around them.

To learn more about vaccinations and about National Immunization Awareness Month, please visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines

About HARC

HARC is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization based in Palm Desert, CA. HARC provides research and evaluation services in the field of health, wellness, and quality of life, with a special focus on the Coachella Valley. To learn more about HARC, visit www.HARCdata.org