

Title: Increasing vaccination rates by breaking down education and hesitancy barriers through targeted education for community health aides (CHAs) in rural Alaska

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Purpose: Immunizations have long been proven to be effective in reducing illnesses, hospitalizations, and death. Low vaccine rates and hesitancy against vaccines are complex global issues that are without a defined solution. With the Norton Sound Region spanning over 23,088 square miles, rural Alaska poses additional vaccination challenges with logistics of delivering vaccine and being able to provide more continuing education. The purpose of this initiative is to increase childhood, adolescent, and influenza vaccination rates among Alaskan Natives 18 years of age and younger in rural village communities through targeted education on vaccines and to address hesitancy obstacles.

Methods: This study will be submitted to the Alaska Institutional Review Board and the Norton Sound Health Corporation Board of Directors for approval. The State of Alaska's Immunization Information System, VacTrak, will be used to identify childhood, adolescent, and influenza vaccination rates in the following villages: Unalakleet, Koyuk, and Savoonga. CHAs are unique paraprofessionals who assist in the treatment of patients within their community. A pre-survey will be distributed to the CHAs of the targeted villages to assess demographic information as well as origins of vaccine perspective/hesitancy. Community Health Aides will receive education through oral presentations, handouts and question/answer sessions on childhood, adolescent, and the influenza vaccine. Vaccination rates for each village community will be reassessed at 1, 3, and 6 month intervals post education and a post-survey will be distributed at 3 and 6 months to the CHAs to determine the effectiveness of the intervention.

Results/Conclusion: In Progress