



Immunization Program Provider Spotlight April 2023

Village Pediatrics

Collaborating with the local public health workforce, creating initiatives to promote human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination in a practice, and getting adolescents up-to-date on their immunizations – that is a win/win/win situation! That is just what Dr. Jennifer Gruen and her staff at Village Pediatrics in Westport did by participating in the “Win/Win/Win with the BIG 3” initiative and taking it one step further. The Win/Win/Win initiative is a campaign by the Immunization Action Plan (IAP) program at Norwalk Health Department to promote adolescent immunization, including HPV. Not only does this initiative help in getting adolescents up-to-date, it also gives them the opportunity to be entered into a raffle to win a free iPad if they received their vaccines. “HPV is not a required vaccine but one that is heavily recommended and really required in our eyes. When kids hear they have a chance at a free iPad, it makes them want to do it. For the children, it is fun. As providers and vaccinators, it is a privilege to be able to support the community by administering an important vaccine we hold near and dear to our heart because we know how many lives it could save in the future” said Chelsea Minopoli, Head of Clinical Operations, about their work with the initiative.

However, the work Village Pediatrics is doing to promote HPV vaccination goes far beyond a single initiative. For them, it is engrained in their workflow and practice culture. While the providers reinforce the first HPV vaccine dose at age 11, by age 9 they start discussing the vaccines they are going to be getting in the future and why they are important – and all staff are involved. Dr. Gruen shared “I really need to commend my staff because what we have done is established a workflow where we educate at every encounter. The medical assistants talk about it, the nurses talk about it, the doctors talk about it. The staff works tirelessly to promote it.” The practice also utilizes their website for immunizations and has a section describing which vaccines are due at every age. While education goes a long way, getting the patients in is also incredibly important. To ensure they are getting adolescents in, the practice runs monthly reminder/recall reports for HPV and calls patients that are due or overdue for their HPV vaccines to get them into the office. Second doses are scheduled after the first, but the report captures children who may fall through the cracks and ensures they remain up-to-date.

While there are still hesitant parents to contend with, Dr. Gruen remains dedicated to educating both the parents and children. “So many parents think of HPV as an STD vaccine. I present it as a cancer-preventing vaccine. We only have two vaccines that prevent cancer – hepatitis B (HepB) and HPV. We give HepB to babies. I reinforce that HPV is safe and is cancer prevention” says Dr. Gruen. She and her staff ensure their office is a pro-vaccine atmosphere and that they continue to educate at all available opportunities. “We talk about vaccines constantly – from the very first HepB dose to their adolescent immunizations. As the years go by and a child gets to their 11-year-old well visit, the parents and patient are already aware that vaccines are encouraged.”

For others who are interested in using similar initiatives in their office, *Dr. Gruen has advice: “Set up a good recall system. Set up monthly recalls for HPV where you can pull in patients due for a first or second dose and contact them to bring them into the office.”* A simple but effective approach to getting adolescents vaccinated, which is always a WIN!

For more information on the work Village Pediatrics is doing, please visit their [website](#). To learn how to run your own reminder recall in CT WiZ, please see [running your own reminder/recall report](#).



Village Pediatrics staff at Halloween.