



## Immunization Program Provider Spotlight June 2024

### Southwest Community Health Center

Southwest Community Health Center (CHC) is dedicated to providing high quality, accessible medical, dental and behavioral health services to individuals and families in the Greater Bridgeport area. They provide vital healthcare access for the uninsured, medically underserved residents of Southwest Bridgeport community. Southwest CHC has four clinics that serve the pediatric population and seven School-Based Health Centers.

Ensuring their patients are protected with all age-appropriate recommended immunizations has always been very important to Southwest CHC. Southwest CHC has always had relatively high immunization rates among their practices, but the COVID-19 pandemic hindered their rates.

Howard Smith, Southwest CHC's Chief of Pediatrics, along with other organization leadership, such as Kristina Colon, Infection Prevention & Vaccine Manager, and Arlene Higgins, Director of Nursing, decided to focus one of their quality improvement metrics on immunizations to help their rates recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, they implemented an immunization challenge among all their Southwest CHC pediatric sites to see who could administer the most vaccines. Patients aged 2–18 years were the focus of this challenge, but all ages within the pediatric spectrum were included.

The four main pediatric sites met and reported out weekly to see who was in the lead. The Southwest CHC school-based health centers even got in on the fun and participated in the immunization challenge! The weekly meeting time was also utilized to bounce ideas off one another and discuss any successes or challenges they were experiencing.

Utilizing a combination of reports from their electronic health record (EHR) and CT WiZ, they determined which patients were due or overdue for vaccines and would call to get them in and up to date as soon as possible.

There were challenges due to time limitations and staffing, but the greatest success of this initiative was attributed to having an immunization champion identified to take the lead at each site. The champions were able to ignite a fire amongst the team, making this truly a fun, engaging team effort from the leadership to the office staff!

Their pediatric immunization rates (for all ACIP recommended vaccines excluding influenza and COVID-19) sitewide started at 45% and have increased to 63% with an upward trajectory. The goal they have set is to reach 75% coverage by the end of summer 2024.

Southwest CHC Website: <https://www.swchc.org>

Check out Southwest CHC on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SouthwestCHC/>

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Left to right in the back row:

Arlene Higgins, DNS; Melanie DeRoberto, MA; Alexandra Rivera, MA; Koketa Drayton, LPN; Sheila Ferreira, Patient Service Representative; Sarah Bohrer, MD; Valerie Irizarry, Patient Service Representative; Howard Smith, PA; Carmen Rivera-Torres, CNO; Dayle Wade, LPN

Left to right in the front row:

Nikki Carino, APRN; Shadeth Ortiz, LPN