

IMMUNIZATION OUTREACH EDUCATION TOOLKIT

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KEEP MAINE'S CHILDREN SAFE AND HEALTHY

Immunizations keep Maine's children healthy, protecting them from dangerous diseases. In the last 50 years, childhood vaccination programs have prevented millions of deaths, improved hundreds of millions of lives, and saved billions of healthcare dollars.

But today, we face a growing problem.

Over the past decade, childhood vaccination rates have been falling in Maine, as in many other areas across the country, due to increased parental hesitations to immunization. A recent estimate indicates that 20,000 children aged five or younger in Maine are exposed to the risk of contracting vaccine-preventable diseases.

Improving childhood vaccination rates has become a priority of state, local, and professional health and public health organizations.

Will you help us keep Maine's children safe and healthy?



REACH OUT TO FAMILIES

With this toolkit, you can help families in your area stay healthy!

There are many ways you can reach out to parents, help them understand the importance of childhood immunizations, and support their healthcare decisions. A good first step is to learn more about the families that live in your area. To develop an effective outreach and education campaign, follow the simple steps below:

Turn to page 4

to learn the reasons why some Maine parents chose to skip or delay childhood immunizations.

Turn to page 5

to learn about messages that help parents make the decision to vaccinate their children.

Turn to page 6

to learn about the different “audiences” for your outreach and education campaign.

Turn to page 7

to identify which types of parents with young children live in your area.

Turn to page 8

to determine what types of outreach activities are best to use with the parents in your area.

Access the enclosed CD

for templates of outreach tools and activities that you can customize to suit your needs.



THE DECISION TO VACCINATE

Recent surveys show that the majority of Maine parents believe in the health protection of childhood immunizations, the value of physician recommendations about vaccinations, and the risks posed to children by vaccine-preventable diseases. However, these surveys also show that parents whose children do not have all of their immunizations are less likely to share these beliefs.

The decision to fully vaccinate a child is often complex, with parents holding many conflicting opinions and ideas about vaccination and vaccines. The most common barriers to parents fully vaccinating their children include:

- Believing vaccines are not safe
- Believing vaccines are not necessary to keep children healthy

For many parents, the issues of safety and necessity are intertwined. Parents who say that vaccinations are unnecessary for their children may actually feel the benefits of immunization are outweighed by perceived health risks. Safety and necessity concerns can also influence parents to choose an alternative or delayed immunization schedule.

WHAT IS AN ALTERNATIVE OR DELAYED SCHEDULE? Some parents choose not to follow the recommended vaccine schedule, and skip or delay some or all of their children's immunizations. This schedule leaves children vulnerable to dangerous diseases for a longer period of time than necessary and lacks medical benefit.

Information about vaccination decisions and effective messages came from research conducted with parents of young children throughout the state by the Maine CDC's Maine Immunization Program. In 2007, parents were surveyed by phone and mail to identify barriers and incentives for immunizing their children. Building upon this research, intercept interviews were conducted in 2011 to both clarify survey data and test potential messages. To learn more about this research, visit: www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/immunization

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS ABOUT CHILDHOOD IMMUNIZATION

The most important message you can communicate to parents is to **talk to their healthcare provider** about their immunization concerns. Healthcare providers are responsible for the health and safety of their patients and are best equipped to answer parents' specific questions about vaccines, the vaccination schedule, and immunization.

When developing outreach materials, focus messages on the safety of vaccines and their necessity for children's health. Emphasize the importance of maintaining the CDC recommended immunization schedule and avoiding alternative or delayed schedules.

Pushy or scary messages don't work with Maine parents. Neither do messages that place immunization decisions in terms of "good" or "bad". Focus instead on the positive benefits of vaccines to child health and well-being.

The samples below—which are included as digital files on the enclosed CD—illustrate the types of messages and images that will be most effective with Maine parents.



ABOUT MAINE PARENTS

Families, like individuals, have personalities that influence how they receive information, perceive themselves and others, participate in their communities, and make decisions about their families' health. In Maine, these families can be organized into five groups called "target audiences". Successful outreach campaigns use strategies designed to motivate each target audience.



The target audiences of parents with young children in Maine include:

Town Choice: Middle-age, college-educated, upper-middle-income parents with small families. Town Choice enjoy interacting with others in their community, but make decisions based on their own analysis and interpretation of the evidence.

Rural Legacy: Middle-age, high-school-educated, lower-middle-income parents with several children. Rural Legacy make decisions using the "rules" they've learned from their life experiences to understand and organize the world around them.

Town Legacy: Young, high-school-educated, low-income parents with large families. Town Legacy trust the advice of leaders in their family or community with similar life experiences to their own and will use that advice to guide their decisions.

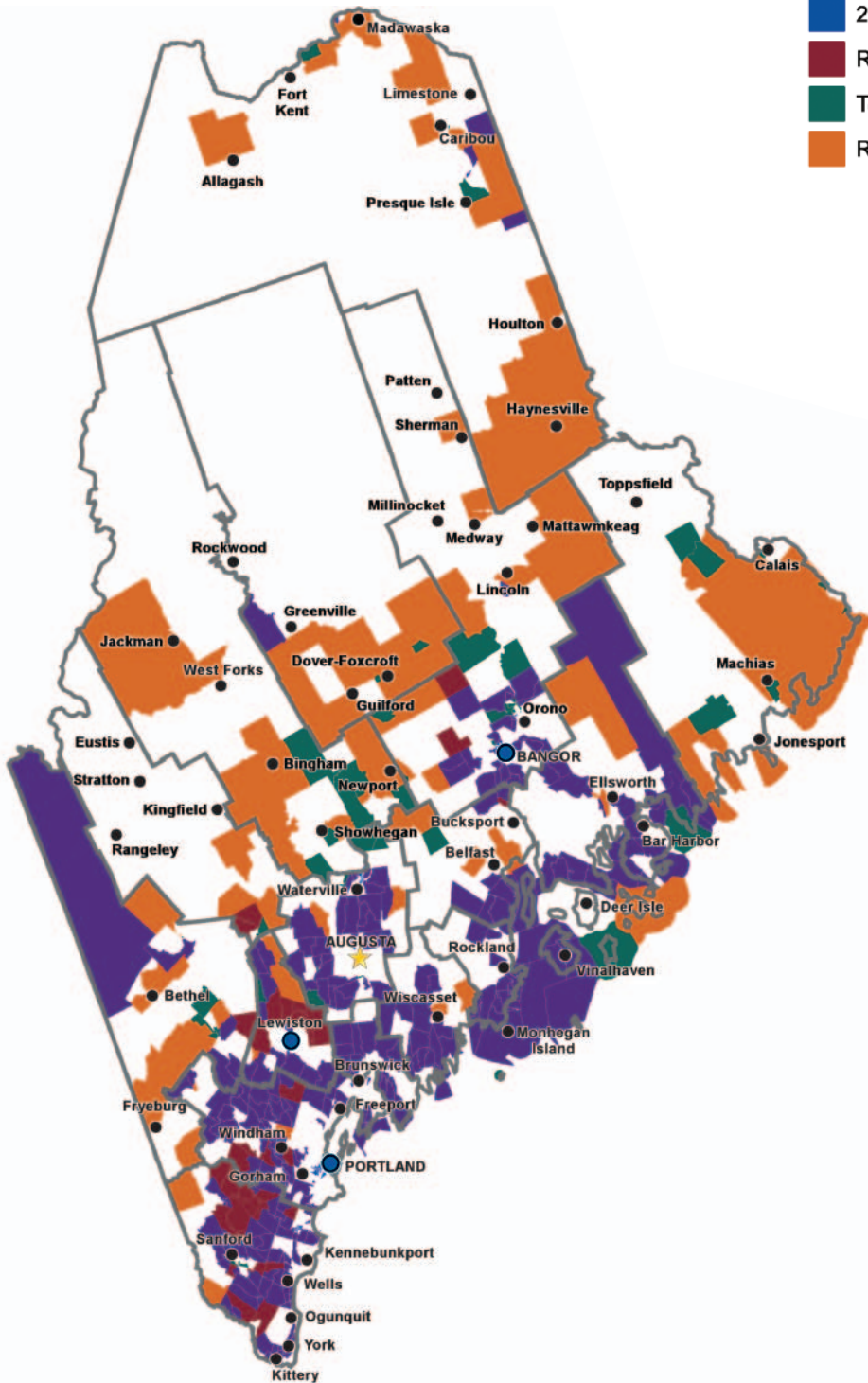
Second City Transitional: Young, low-income parents with some college education and few or no children in the house. Second City Transitional make decisions based on the promise of immediate benefit for themselves and their families.

Rural Choice: Middle-age, upper-middle-income parents with some college education and several children in the house. Rural Choice use "rules"—derived from established traditions in religion, local economy, inter-family dynamics, etc.—to make decisions.

FAMILIES IN YOUR AREA

Identify the different target audiences living in your area using the map below.

- Town Choice
- 2nd City Transitional
- Rural Choice
- Town Legacy
- Rural Legacy



MAINE TARGET AUDIENCES AT A GLANCE

Choose outreach strategies based on the kinds of families living in your community.

AUDIENCE	TOWN CHOICE	RURAL LEGACY
PROFILE	<p>Age 25-44</p> <p>College graduates</p> <p>Upper-middle income</p> <p>Smaller family size</p>	<p>Age 25-44</p> <p>High school graduates</p> <p>Lower-middle income</p> <p>Several children in the household</p>
LOCATION	<p>Concentrated along the coast</p>	<p>Found throughout the state away from the coast</p>
TYPES OF OUTREACH	<p>Print (mailers, newspapers, magazines, banners, posters, brochures, etc.)</p> <p>Electronic (listservs, emails, websites, web banners, phone calls)</p> <p>Event (discussions, sporting events, movie previews, celebrity appearances, etc.)</p>	<p>Print (mailers, newspapers, brochures, posters, yard signs, etc.)</p> <p>Electronic (emails, websites, web banners, listservs, phone calls)</p> <p>Event (celebrity appearances, political events, art/cultural events, etc.).</p>
SUGGESTED STRATEGIES	<p>Email series from expert source, with opportunity for parent feedback loop</p> <p>Newspaper Op-Ed's by experts</p>	<p>Local "celebrity" (political, church, etc.) endorsement</p> <p>"Lead by example" campaign including stories from local influential figures</p>

TOWN LEGACY	SECOND CITY TRANSITIONAL	RURAL CHOICE
<p>Younger than age 35</p> <p>High school graduates</p> <p>Low income</p> <p>Larger family size</p>	<p>Younger than age 35</p> <p>Some college education</p> <p>Low income</p> <p>Singles, couples, and smaller families</p>	<p>Age 25-44</p> <p>Some college education</p> <p>Upper-middle income</p> <p>Several children in the household</p>
<p>Found in parts of Western Maine and Aroostook and Washington Counties</p>	<p>Found primarily in Cumberland County</p>	<p>Found in York and Androscoggin Counties</p>
<p>Print (mailers, newspapers, point of purchase displays, brochures, etc.)</p> <p>Electronic (emails, phone calls/ messages)</p> <p>Event (discussions, award ceremonies, art/cultural events, etc.)</p>	<p>Print (newspapers, mailers, yard signs, banners, posters, point of purchase displays, etc.)</p> <p>Electronic (phone calls, emails, websites, web banners, listservs, text messages)</p> <p>Event (discussions, civic events, educational events, etc.)</p>	<p>Print (mailers, brochures, point of purchase displays, magazines, etc.)</p> <p>Event (art/cultural events, award ceremonies, celebrity appearances, etc.)</p>
<p>“Good neighbor” peer-to-peer campaign sharing immunization information</p> <p>Community-based events such as town days</p>	<p>Advertisements in independent local media</p> <p>Social media campaign</p>	<p>Family outdoors/sporting event promotion</p> <p>Mailer with emotional appeal</p>

READY TO START HELPING KEEP MAINE CHILDREN HEALTHY?

Start planning your outreach campaign using the information in this toolkit and on the enclosed CD. If you do not have a lot of experience with performing outreach, don't worry—it's easier than you think! Remember to:

1. Identify the area that you would like to focus on for your outreach activities.
2. Identify the Target Audience families living in those areas using the map on page 7 and gain more in depth information using the county specific maps on the enclosed CD.
3. Determine what types of outreach activities are best for the Target Audience families in your area using the chart on page 8 and gain more in depth information using the Target Audience profiles on the enclosed CD.
4. Plan events and create materials for your Target Audience families. Use the sample materials on the enclosed CD to guide you, such as:
 - Sample posters,
 - Sample media pitch, and
 - Sample newsletter items.



To learn more about this campaign, contact the Maine Immunization Program at 207-287-3746 or visit www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/immunization



Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner



