

Ambassador Toolkit

DSHS Immunization Unit



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

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OVERVIEW

In 2019, the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Immunization Unit established the Immunization Ambassadors Program to support collaborations between local health departments and specific audiences identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as “essential and/or underserved.”

Participation in the Immunization Ambassadors Program is a required activity, as listed in the DSHS Immunization Contractors Guide under “Community Partnership” (7.5.09). The program is supported by the DSHS Immunization Unit, its regional centers and the responsible entities responsible for TVFC/ASN provider oversight.

The Immunization Unit created the Immunization Ambassadors Program to accelerate and coordinate on-the-ground projects, promote community engagement, and support public health through vaccinations. Ambassadors serve critically important roles as local coordinators, partners, facilitators and leaders.

The Immunization Ambassadors Toolkit includes information about the program and the Ambassador position, providing:

- overview information on the Immunization Ambassadors program;
- information on recruiting Ambassadors; and
- templates, resources and information for current Ambassadors.

By providing cohesive information, a further goal is to improve recognition of the benefits of the Ambassador program to ensure ongoing success for the Immunization Ambassadors Program for years to come.

Benefits of the Immunization Ambassadors Program

- Strengthen ties within the community
- Build trust among partners
- Leverage resources
- Create network to share lessons learned

Responsibilities of the Ambassador

The Ambassador serves as:

1. Liaison/ Point of Contact – The Ambassador collects and communicates insights about the needs and priorities of its audience. Through relationships, the Ambassador can effectively identify opportunities and share resources and tools.
2. Project Coordinator/ Leader – The Ambassador navigates and follows the many moving parts of public health, tracking what is happening, setting priorities and ensuring coordination between audiences.
3. Facilitator/Convener – The Ambassador convenes and facilitates discussions within its core audience, seeking fresh collaboration outside of traditional stakeholders.
4. Messenger/Reporter – The Ambassador shares and receives information from other Ambassador groups, establishing a strong distribution system across audiences.



What is the Immunization Ambassadors Toolkit?

This toolkit includes information about the Immunization Ambassadors Program and the Ambassador position. The toolkit has comprehensive materials that can be used to educate recruit for new positions as well as support current Ambassadors.

The sections are categorized by targeted audiences. Your goal is to identify one representative for each target audience:

- Primary/Secondary Schools (or school districts)
- Post-secondary (college, trade, etc.)
- Childcare/daycare facilities (young children)
- Facilities/organizations serving elderly
- First responder organizations
- Private industry (offices or hospitals)



AUDIENCE: Primary/Secondary Schools

Example of target audiences: Independent School Districts; parent-teacher Associations; individual schools (public or private); local school boards/boards of trustees; after-school programs.

About the Audience

This group has knowledge of general immunizations associated with children and adolescents. At specific times of the year, there is a focus on immunization requirements for school attendance.

But beyond the beginning of school, another important immunization milestone is flu season, which takes place during the tradition school year.

The flu can spread quickly and invade households, which can have a far-reaching effect on community health. Each flu season offers an opportunity to work within this audience to spread the importance of vaccinations.



Certain immunizations are recommended during pre-teen years. Engaging this audience would serve as another means to share messaging for Tdap, HPV and meningococcal.

Talking Points: Why should they participate?

By stepping into the role of an Ambassador, you will make significant contributions to the lives of students, their families, and many others in your community.

In addition to the health benefits of increasing “herd immunity” that slows the spread of illness and protects those

who cannot be vaccinated, encouraging vaccination rates among students has been shown to improve their success in school by reducing missed attendance.

Student success in school is more likely if attendance is consistent. Poor attendance is linked to higher student drop-out rates in high school.

Because school budgets are often based on average daily attendance, fewer students can result in less money for essential classroom needs.

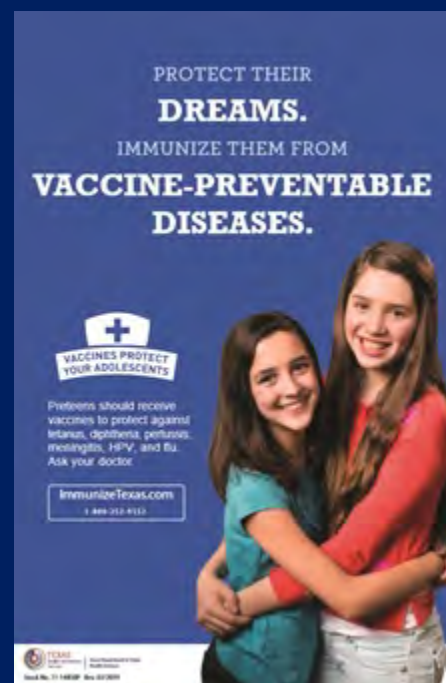
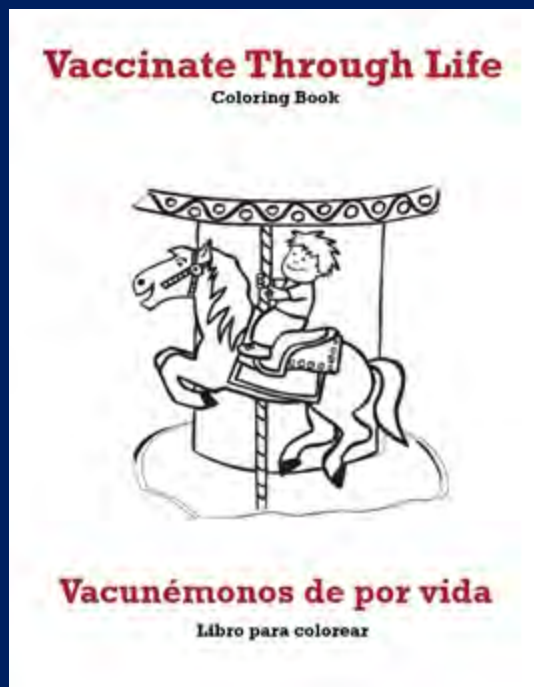
Within the community, parents look to you for guidance on how to ensure the safety and well-being of each student. Our program will help you get the most up-to-date information to them.

Suggested activities w/ calendar

- Back-to-School (Aug-Sept):
Offer to share materials for parents to make sure their kids are up to date on school-required vaccinations.
- Year-round:
Explore options for on-site school-based health centers.
- Texas Flu Day (Oct. 1):
Create creative contest (art, literary, etc.) on flu-related messaging
- National Public Health Week (in April):
Partner with local community groups to hold weekend Public Health Fair, inviting students and parents.

Catalogue of relevant audience-specific materials

- General Immunizations Coloring Book (Available soon)
- General Immunizations Activity Book (Available soon)
- Let's talk immunizations (Childhood) / Hablemos de inmunizaciones (Infancia) Bilingual Poster (Stock # 11-11965P)
- Pre-Teen Vaccine Poster - English (Stock #11-14450P)
- Flu Fighters Activity Book - Bilingual (Stock #11-13338)
- Texas Minimum-State-Requirements-for-Students-K-12 (Stock #6-14)
- "Fight the Flu" Child Poster (Stock #11-13710P-3)
- ACIP Recommended Immunization Schedule for Persons 0 – 18 years - English (Stock #6-105)



AUDIENCE: Post-Secondary Education (college, trade schools)

Example of target audiences: universities; community colleges; health-related institutions; technical college system; state colleges; junior colleges.

About the Audience

This group is responsible for making sure that higher education institutions adhere to mandated immunization requirements for attendance. Specific vaccines targeting the traditionally aged college student are as follows:

- Meningococcal conjugate
- Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis (Tdap) ...
- HPV
- Seasonal flu

Creating a relationship with this group could also lead to an increase in Texas Immunization Registry enrollments.

A child registered in the registry must sign an adult consent form when they turn 18 years old. The registry holds childhood immunization records until the participant turns 26 years old. If a person does not submit the proper form by their 26th birthday, their immunization records are deleted.

Review the list of Texas' public and independent institutions:

<http://www.txhighereddata.org/Interactive/Institutions.cfm>



Talking Points: Why should they participate?

As an Ambassador, you fulfill an especially crucial role in the health of college students in your community. Because they interact in such close proximity (classrooms, dorm rooms, shared apartments, sports, social /service organizations), students have a far higher risk of getting communicable diseases.

By doing your part to encourage students to get protected against vaccine-preventable diseases—from seasonal flu and meningitis to the human papillomavirus and measles—you're directly participating in their well-being.

You are also helping to prevent widespread, often dangerous outbreaks of disease among students that can cause:

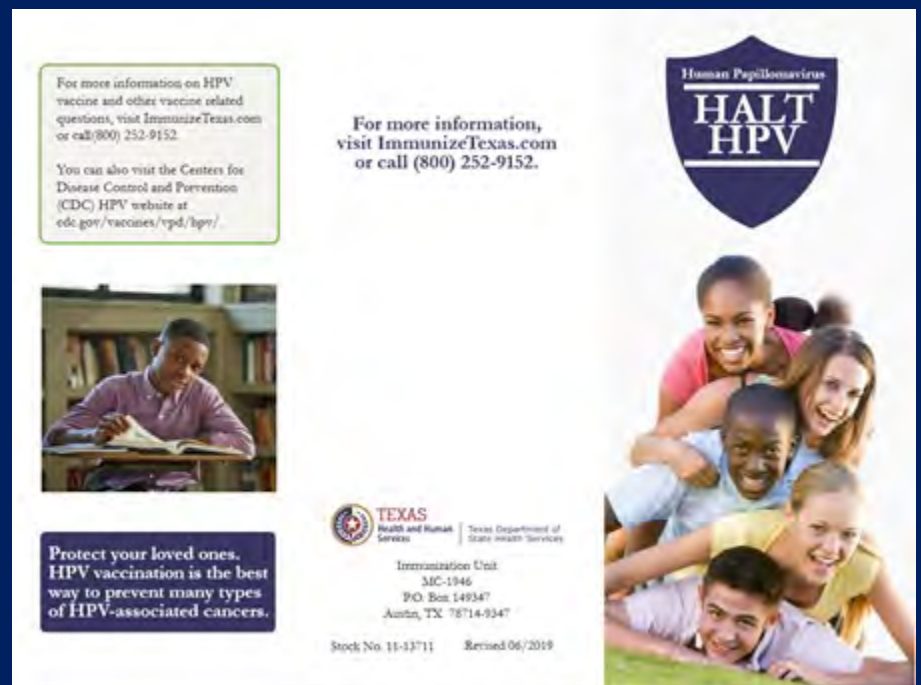
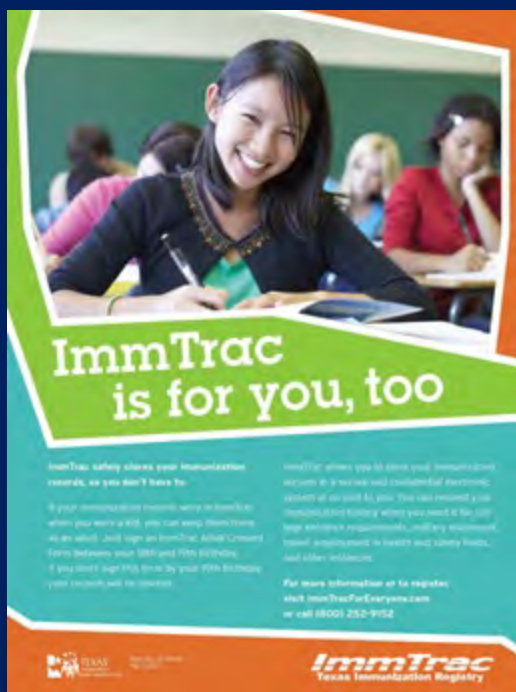
- Missed attendance
- Cancelled classes
- Disruption in other areas of campus activities

Suggested activities with calendar

- High School Seniors' Graduation Season (late April to early May):
Share materials and VIS information.
- National Public Health Week (in April):
Work with local campus to set up enrollment ImmTrac2 information booth/kiosk.
Share materials explaining the benefits of joining ImmTrac2.
- Texas Flu Day (Oct. 1):
Work with campus health services to give flu shots.

Catalogue of relevant audience-specific materials

- "ImmTrac is for you, too" Poster-Young Adult - Bilingual (Stock # 11-13708P)
- "Fight the Flu" Brochure - English (Stock #11-13710)
- "Fight the Flu" Brochure - Spanish (Stock #11-13710A)
- "Fight the Flu" Adults Poster (Stock #11-13710P-1)
- "Halt HPV" Brochure - English (Stock #11-13711)
- "Halt HPV" Brochure - Spanish (Stock #11-13711A)
- Meningitis Brochure - English (Stock # 11-13712)
- Meningitis Brochure - Spanish (Stock #11-13712A)



AUDIENCE: Childcare/Daycare Facilities (young children)

Example of target audiences: childcare facilities; daycare facilities; child development centers; preschools.

About the Audience

On-time vaccination throughout childhood is essential because it helps provide immunity before children are exposed to potentially life-threatening diseases. This age group serves as the first step.

Babies are born with immune systems that can fight most germs, but there are some deadly diseases they can't handle. That's why they need vaccines to strengthen their immune system.

With the close proximity of infants and toddlers in a childcare/daycare setting, it is important for parents to get their children vaccinated, following the recommended schedule.

Talking Points: Why should they participate?

By serving as an Ambassador, you will fill a pivotal role in helping to protect the health of young children in your community and many others.

An unvaccinated child is not the only one at risk of illness. In addition to spreading disease to the other children in a childcare setting, they can spread it to their families, and the people who cannot get vaccinated for health reasons.



Besides the important benefit of increasing "herd immunity" in your community, your active support of immunizations produces other advantages including economic ones that influence where parents decide to place their children:

- Studies have shown more than 75% of parents strongly support childcare policies that require vaccines.
- Two-thirds of parents want to know if children who are not up to date on immunizations are excluded from attending a facility.
- A child without required vaccinations may mean the parent misses work and wages because they have no access to childcare.

Suggested activities with calendar

- Back-to-School (Aug-Sept):
Offer to share materials for parents to make sure their kids are up to date on required vaccinations.
- Year-round:
Distribute monthly immunization-related info packets.
- Texas Flu Day (Oct. 1):
Partner with local pharmacy to set up flu shot clinic for parents and caregivers.
- National Infant Immunization Week (April-May):
Partner with local WIC offices to hold public health fairs.

Catalogue of relevant audience-specific materials

- General Immunizations Coloring Book (Available soon)
- Let's talk immunizations (Childhood) / Hablemos de inmunizaciones (Infancia) Bilingual Poster (Stock # 11-11965P)
- Flu Fighters Activity Book - Bilingual (Stock #11-13338)
- 2020-21 Texas Vaccine Requirements for Child-Care Facilities – Bilingual (Stock #6-15)
- "Fight the Flu" Child Poster (Stock #11-13710P-3)
- ACIP Recommended Immunization Schedule for Persons 0 – 18 years - English (Stock #6-105)
- Flu Fact Sheet for Child-Care Settings - Bilingual (Stock #11-12812)
- Total Doses Required for Childcare and Pre-K Facilities (Stock #11-15705)
- Emily Lastinger brochure - Little Kids Get the Flu Too - English (Stock #11-12811)
- Emily Lastinger brochure - Little Kids Get the Flu Too - Spanish (Stock #11-12811A)



AUDIENCE: Facilities/Organizations Serving Elderly

Example of target audiences: assisted living organizations; retirement communities; senior living apartment complexes; city/county-based councils on aging; aging and disability resource centers.

About the Audience

As people get older, their immune systems tend to weaken over time, putting them at higher risk for certain diseases. To this point, for example, over 60 percent of seasonal flu-related hospitalizations occur in people 65 years and older. In addition to seasonal flu (influenza) vaccine and Td or Tdap vaccine (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis), older adults should also get:

- Shingles vaccine, which protects against shingles and the complications from the disease (recommended for healthy adults 50 years and older)
- Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV23), which protects against serious pneumococcal disease, including meningitis and bloodstream infections (recommended for all adults 65 years or older, and for adults younger than 65 years who have certain health conditions)
- Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13), which protects against serious pneumococcal disease and pneumonia (recommended for all adults with a condition that weakens the immune system,



cerebrospinal fluid leak, or cochlear implant)

Adults 65 years or older who have never received a dose of PCV13 and do not have one of the conditions described above may also discuss vaccination with their vaccine provider to decide if PCV13 is appropriate for them.

Talking Points: Why should they participate?

Serving as an Ambassador to advance the immunization rates of those 65 years and older represents one of the most extraordinary contributions you can make to the health of your community.

Protecting our older, more vulnerable neighbors from vaccine-preventable diseases makes your role advocating for their health a crucial one for all who live in our area.

Whether they live in a group residence or in their own homes, providing seniors the encouragement and convenient opportunities to get recommended vaccines results in an enhanced quality of life for them. This can include:

- Reducing the frequency of non-routine medical care
- Lowering medical costs
- Reducing the instances of serious or life-threatening illnesses
- Lowering the risk of disease spreading to others in their surroundings.

Suggested activities with calendar

- Older Americans Month (May):
Prepare and present talks on the importance of immunizations.
- National Immunization Awareness Month (August):
Deliver information packets to healthcare staff at local facilities.
- National Influenza Vaccination Week (December):
Set up mobile unit to visit retirement/assisted living communities and give flu shots to seniors.
- Year-round:
Coordinate with city/county-based councils on aging to have presence at all public events.

Catalogue of relevant audience-specific materials

- "Fight the Flu" Seniors Poster – Bilingual (Stock #11-13710P)
- "Fight the Flu" Multi-Generation Poster – Bilingual (Stock #11-13710P-2)
- Every Dose Matters Vaccines Aren't Just for Kids – Bilingual (Stock #11-12853P-1)
- "Who's at risk for pneumococcal diseases?" – Bilingual (Stock #11-15086)
- "Adults Need Vaccine Too" Adult Safety Net (ASN) Program Brochure - Bilingual (Stock #11-14202)



AUDIENCE: First Responder Organizations

Example of target audiences: local EMS affiliate; community police; local fire departments; county-based first responder organizations.

About the Audience

It is critical to increase vaccinations among first responders prior to deployment to a disaster area. In preparation to respond to an emergency or a disaster area, it is important for first responders to be up to date with all of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice (ACIP) recommended adult immunizations.

In many instances, first responders do not receive recommended vaccines until preparing for deployment or when they arrive at the disaster site. Since vaccinations do not provide immediate protection, this delay puts first responders at risk of acquiring these infections and elevates the potential to spread vaccine-preventable diseases upon return to their home community, especially among their immediate family members.



First responders may come into contact with bodily fluids and/or be exposed to contaminated materials that could lead to the possible transmission of vaccine-preventable diseases. Vaccination is an essential part of disease prevention.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), all first responders should receive a tetanus booster, a Td, or Tdap. Hepatitis B

vaccine is also recommended for first responders. A Tdap vaccine is recommended if you have not received a tetanus booster in the last ten years.

Talking Points: Why should they participate?

By volunteering to be an Ambassador, you will fill a key role in strengthening the immunization coverage of other first responder colleagues in your community.

From emphasizing the need for different vaccines to seasonal reminders about flu shots, your active promotion of immunizations helps to:

- Provide protection for first responders during their regular duties
- Provide protection for first responders' families
- Improves first responders' up-to-date status so they are mission-ready in the event of a disaster. Vaccine-preventable diseases are more common currently, so it's important first responders are ready to roll.

If you manage a first responder facility, you play a critical role in ensuring your first responder team is fully immunized before responding to an emergency or disaster.

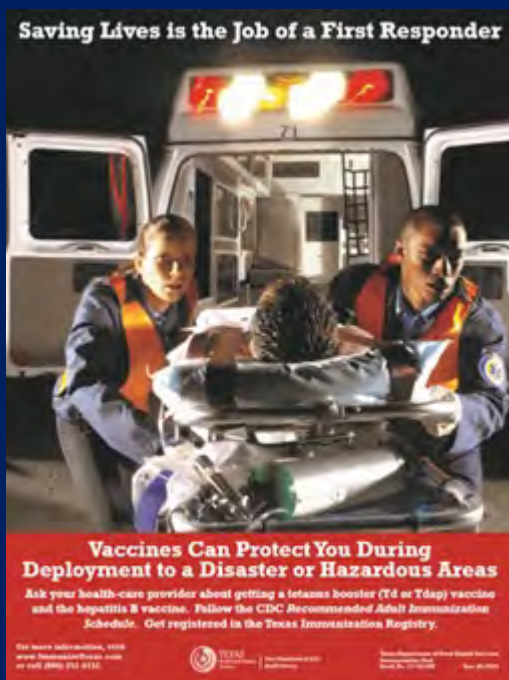
Provide your staff with the information and vaccinations they need to be ready to respond by implementing a first responder vaccination monitoring system.

Suggested activities with calendar

- Pre-Hurricane Season (April-May):
Send information on suggested vaccinations to local first responders organizations. *"2020 Atlantic hurricane season will begin on Monday, June 1 and ends on Monday, November 30. Are you ready?"*
- National Immunization Awareness Month (August):
Work with local groups to certify up-to-date vaccinations of entire units. Also, a perfect time to push ImmTrac2 enrollment.
- Texas Flu Day (Oct. 1):
Work with local providers to set up mobile clinics to give flu shots to first responders and their families.

Catalogue of relevant audience-specific materials

- Texas First Responder Immunization Toolkit (Available online)
- "First Responders - Get Vaccinated" Brochure (Stock #11-14106)
- "ImmTrac2 First Responders Brochure" (Stock #11-13079)
- First Responders - Get Vaccinated Poster - English (Stock #11-14106P)



AUDIENCE: Private Industry

Example of target audiences: largest local employer; manufacturing company; hospitals; local government offices; nonprofits.

About the Audience

All adults need vaccines to help protect against serious diseases that can result in severe illness, missed work, medical bills and an inability to care for their families. Adults may not have received all their vaccines during childhood. Some childhood vaccines do not offer protection into adulthood and a booster may be needed. Some vaccines are recommended based on age, job, lifestyle, or health condition.

Getting vaccinated lowers the risk of getting sick and lowers the chance of spreading a serious disease to others including those that are most vulnerable to severe illness such as infants, older adults, and those with chronic health conditions or weakened immune systems.



Talking Points: Why should they participate?

Private industry - General businesses
By volunteering as an Ambassador, you will fill an important role in helping to protect the well-being of co-workers and colleagues. By extension, you're also helping others in your community like families, senior citizens, and those unable to be vaccinated due to health conditions.

In addition to the additional medical costs incurred for employees when they get ill, their time away from the

workplace incurs economic costs for the employer. According to a June 2019 study, unscheduled absenteeism costs roughly:

- \$3,600 per year for each hourly worker
- \$2,650 each year for salaried employees

In many cases, people go to work are not fully aware they are ill and end up infecting co-workers who, in turn, get sick and miss work. It's a domino effect that can easily be avoided when you encourage everyone in the workplace to get protected against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Private industry – Healthcare businesses

By serving as an Ambassador, you fill a crucial role in bolstering the immunization rates of the people who are most responsible for the health of us all. Those working in the healthcare and medical industries are so dedicated, they may not be caring for themselves in order to care for others.

During what will likely be a prolonged health crisis, it's especially important to encourage co-workers and colleagues—those who are on the front lines with patients--to stay current on protection against vaccine-preventable diseases. When health initiatives like flu shots and vaccine reminders, are brought into the workplace, they are more successful because the encouragement is:

- Management sponsored
- Viewed as a team effort
- More accessible and convenient.

Suggested activities with calendar

- National Cervical Health Awareness Month (January):
Distribute information on HPV vaccines can help prevent infection from high-risk HPV types that can lead to cervical cancer.
- National Public Health Week (April):
Hold health fair for employees, inviting local public health organizations to exhibit.
- National Immunization Awareness Month (August):
Coordinate an ImmTrac2 enrollment drive.
- Texas Flu Day (Oct. 1):
Set up an on-site flu shot clinic with local pharmacy.

Catalogue of relevant audience-specific materials

Every Dose Matters – Adult Poster (Available soon)

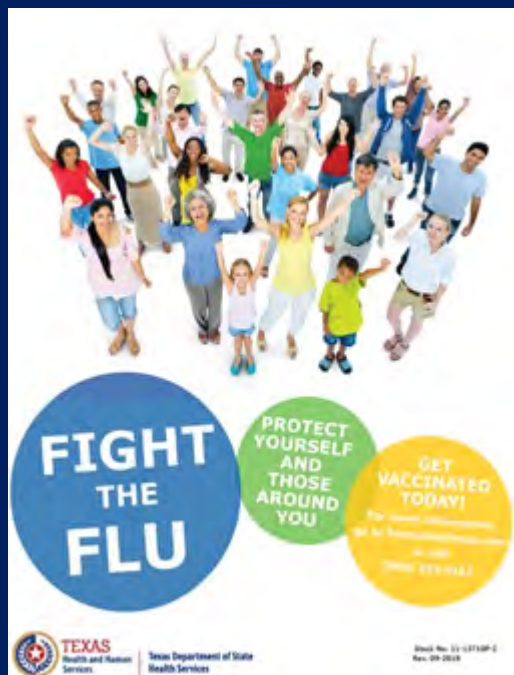
“Fight the Flu” Multi-Generation Poster – Bilingual (Stock #11-13710P-2)

“Fight the Flu” Adults Poster - Bilingual (Stock #11-13710P-1)

“Fight the Flu” Brochure - English (Stock #11-13710)

“Fight the Flu” Brochure - Spanish (Stock #11-13710A)

ImmTrac2 Parent Brochure, “A Lifetime of Vaccines” – Bilingual (Stock #11-15064)



General Messaging Samples

Sample One – Email introducing the Ambassador Program

Sample Two – Handout, “Four Ways to Build Ambassador Awareness”

Sample One – Email introducing the Ambassador Program

Dear [Name of group or Leader of group],

I am writing on behalf of [LHD]. We appreciate your work for [highlight group’s specific mission] and would like to join forces to achieve a common goal.

As a community health partner, we strive to promote the health and well-being of [target audience] and their families and friends through support, education, and ensuring access to programs and services. Part of our mission is to eliminate the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases by increasing vaccine coverage for all as well as raise awareness of the diseases that vaccines prevent.

To effectively realize our goal, we would like to invite you to serve as an Immunization Ambassador. Joining the program will offer the following benefits for you and your community:

- Bring about more effective and efficient delivery of programs and eliminate any unnecessary duplication of effort.
- Pool resources.
- Increase communication among groups and break down stereotypes.
- Revitalize the sagging energies of your supporters who are trying to do too much alone.
- Plan and launch community-wide initiatives on a variety of issues.

I would like the opportunity to speak to you in greater detail about the program. Please respond to this email with some suggested dates and times for a quick phone conversation.

Thank you for your service within the community.

[Your name]

[Title]

[LHD]

Sample Two – Handout – Four Ways to Build Ambassador Awareness

There are endless ways you can generate awareness about the importance of immunizations—from simply mentioning your role as an Immunization Ambassador to alerting the media about our programs. Regardless of how you choose to spread the word, your message informs others about the Immunization Ambassadors Program and helps them understand your role in public health. Try these tips.

1. Let people know you are an Immunization Ambassador

Increase awareness by simply making sure people know you are an Immunization Ambassador. Tell your [colleagues, supervisor, students, and other contacts]. Send them an email about your role, including a link to Immunization Ambassador Web page. Ask them to forward the link to anybody who may interested in getting more details.

2. Network with local Ambassadors

Introduce yourself to other Ambassadors in your region. This will help build a local/regional network and facilitate collaboration in the future. A roster will be included in your materials.

3. Make it easy for people to find you

Display public health posters and flyers around your office or in an appropriate location at your workplace where people will see them. Also, consider hanging posters with contact information in high-traffic areas of clinics, hospitals, and community health centers.

4. Get out the facts

Use fact sheets to raise awareness about the immunizations and spark conversation. Keep several in your office and have them on hand to share your audiences.



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