

TITLE: H1N1 Outreach to Multicultural Communities –Courtesy of CIDRAP

From: Ohio Department of Health

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Description

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) conducted multicultural outreach to a wide range of communities just as their H1N1 vaccination campaign was underway. Health department planners used research on previous vaccination rates among various populations in Ohio to create targeted media and outreach efforts specifically among African-American and Hispanic populations.

ODH initiated its campaign with a strong focus on engaging multicultural leaders. In December 2009, ODH hosted two conference calls: one with African-American leaders and another with Hispanic leaders. These calls provided an introductory opportunity for the health director and other planners to describe the H1N1 pandemic and discuss unique risks associated with the leaders' respective communities. During the calls, community leaders could make recommendations on how ODH could reach out to and educate their communities in an effective and trustworthy manner. ODH also communicated information about H1N1 to individual leaders in Latino, African-American, and Somali communities.

Many mayors in large urban centers such as Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton, and Toledo are also regarded as trustworthy sources of information among multicultural communities. ODH worked with these mayors to ensure that they were well informed about H1N1 and able to provide outreach to the urban communities. ODH also partnered with African-American clergy to distribute information to faith-based establishments, and the health director and other ODH staff made themselves available to speak to congregations about H1N1.

Integrating information about H1N1 and vaccination programs into media campaigns also formed a significant part of ODH's outreach to multicultural communities. ODH filmed a public service announcement (PSA) on vaccination featuring a celebrity testimonial from Archie Griffin, a two-time Heisman trophy winner and hometown hero. ODH also ran ads in the Call & Post—"Cleveland's African American Newspaper," which reaches 41,500 subscribers and 290 retail locations in three cities. Ads primarily urge minority populations to seek H1N1 vaccination and feature men and women encouraging the public to "Be a Flu Fighter—Knock Out H1N1!" ODH also ran H1N1 vaccination ads in Hispanic and Latino newspapers, including La Prensa, La Voz, El Tiempo, El Sol de Cleveland, and El Informativo.

ODH made a concerted effort to engage and promote vaccination to multicultural communities during a time when the health department was accelerating its H1N1 vaccination campaigns and clinics. Its actions were informed by research on which populations typically experience low rates of influenza vaccination, and also on planners' knowledge of multicultural

communities in their state. For instance, a large number of Mexican and Guatemalan families reside in Lake County, Ohio, and planners reached out to them by placing an ad in a Spanish-language newspaper that serves this region (El Informativo). The multi-pronged approach to engaging leaders and the general public ensured that people were provided with enough trustworthy information to be able to make a decision about H1N1 influenza vaccination.