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Registries Help Kids and Docs After Natural Disaster

Millions Saved in Vaccine and Administration Fees

It's hurricane season again. We see it regularly on the local news and in public service announcements: Be prepared. Stock up on water and nonperishable food and batteries. Know your evacuation route. But what will happen to all of the immunization records in your office should disaster strike? If they are paper records, they are subject to water and fire loss. Electronic records are only better if your system has an offsite backup storage that remains secure during the disaster. Remote backups ensure that the records will be there for your office once it is back up and running, but they do not guarantee access for your patients who may be forced to evacuate to other parts of the state or even the US.

The only way to protect your immunization records and keep them available for all your patients regardless of where they go is to store those records in Florida SHOTS, a free, statewide, Web-based immunization registry. This was born out in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina when soon after the storm, Florida's registry could access the Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama state registries. With this access, the help desk offered assistance for looking up immunization

records for evacuees. Florida SHOTS' staff received and responded to hundreds of inquiries from health departments, private providers, and schools and found many immunization records for children displaced by Hurricane Katrina. On September 30, 2005, alone staff handled records for more than 500 kids.

The same scenario played out at immunization registries across the nation. A recent article, "The Success of an Immunization Information System in the Wake of Hurricane Katrina" by Julie A. Boom, MD, Anna C. Dragsbaek, JD, and Cynthia S. Nelson, MPH, published in *Pediatrics*, Volume 119, Number 6, June 2007, looked at the benefits of immunization information systems (IIS) in the Houston area following Hurricane Katrina. According to the article's abstract, "within days after Hurricane Katrina in September 2005, the Houston-Harris County Immunization Registry was connected to the Louisiana Immunization Network for Kids Statewide. This linkage provided immediate access to the immunization records of children who were forced to evacuate the New Orleans, Louisiana area. **One year later, 18,900 immunization records have been**

See **NATURAL DISASTER** page 2

For more information about how you can participate, please call the Florida SHOTS enrollment desk at

(877) 888-SHOT

Bin A-11, 4052 Bald Cypress Way
 Tallahassee, FL 32399-1719
 FAX (850) 922-4195
 E-MAIL flshots@DOH.state.fl.us
www.flshots.com



Bureau of
 Immunization



Florida Shots
 CERTIFIED PROVIDER

These software companies have created data exchange capabilities between Florida SHOTS and their EMR, practice management, or billing software. We appreciate their partnership!

- Automated Medical Systems
- AutoMedicWorks
- Bond Technologies
- Electronic Healthcare Systems
- JMJ Technologies
- MediTab
- NCG Medical (*Perfect Care*)
- Office Practicum
- SynaMed
- TriMed Technologies (*Expert Practice Manager*)

- VipaHealth Solutions (*SmartEMR*)
- Amazing Charts*
- Claimgear*
- e-Clinical*
- e-MD*
- Medisoft*
- NextGen*
- Practice Partner—McKesson*
- Visionary*

*in development

I-Trends

Registries Help Kids and Docs

found, representing an estimated cost savings of more than \$1.6 million for vaccine alone and \$3.04 million for vaccine plus administration fees. This experience demonstrated the vital and previously unrecognized functionality of immunization information systems in a public health emergency.”

The authors estimated cost of vaccine using the Vaccines for Children (VFC) pricelist. The cost of vaccine plus administration fees was calculated based on the vaccine administration fee of \$14.85 per dose permitted by VFC.

Boom, et al., recount how Houston’s IIS was able to help evacuees and saves millions of dollars in the process:

“In the immediate days after this devastating event, 200,000 evacuees from the greater New Orleans area headed for Houston, Texas. Most evacuees arrived with few personal belongings. Needless to say, most children’s immunizations records were left at home.

In an effort to assist patients’ families to find their children’s records, the staff of the Houston-Harris County Immunization Registry (HHCIR) contacted the vendor for HHCIR and the Louisiana Immunization Network for Kids Statewide (LINKS) to inquire about connecting the 2 systems. Importantly, both registries were already following Health Level Seven (HL7) standards. HL7 is a nationally recognized standard for electronic exchange of health-related data between computer systems. Using HL7, a bridge was built between the 2 IISs in 24 hours. Programmers diligently tested the connection, and the HHCIR-LINKS connection went live on September 9, 2005, a mere 10 days after landfall of the hurricane.

To assist public health officials in searching for children’s immunization records, the Web-based immunization registry was made available to providers in the makeshift medical clinics in the Astrodome and George R. Brown Convention Center. Health care workers at these shelters were able to readily access records for children by using the HHCIR-LINKS connection.”

Additional Savings and Benefits of Retrieved Immunization Data

The article goes on to point out additional savings that are realized when shot records can be retrieved in lieu of revaccinating,

including costs associated with:

- Shipping, storing, and handling vaccine
- Hiring additional personnel to revaccinate those with lost records
- Allocating physical space to administer shots to a large number of children

In addition to the dollar savings, recovering immunization data from IIS’s such as Florida SHOTS benefits patients and their health-care providers.

Benefits to Patients

- Registries safeguard important health information that will be used throughout a person’s life.
- They save thousands of children from the pain and inconvenience of reimmunization.
- They allow parents and children to avoid lost work time and missed school.

Benefits to Providers

- Registries preserve shot records.
- They save staff time and the vaccine costs that would be required to reimmunize children with lost records.
- Registries allow providers to serve their patients efficiently and effectively when paper records are permanently lost.

From a public health standpoint, we all benefit when we avoid unnecessarily revaccinating large numbers of children, at enormous expense, in the wake of a catastrophic loss.

As to their Hurricane Katrina case study, the authors’ conclude: “When IISs are fully used in a public health emergency, they yield economic benefits and strengthen our ability to serve our patients when they are most vulnerable.”

Conclusion

Hurricanes are a fact of life in Florida. Please join us in being prepared should disaster—natural or manmade—strike our state. If you’re not already enrolled in Florida SHOTS, enrollment is free. If you are enrolled, please ensure that you input shots in the registry either manually or through automated data upload so that those records are protected.

For more information about the registry, enrollment, usage, or data upload, please call 877-888-SHOT (7468) or visit www.flshots.com. Together, we can work to protect our children from vaccine-preventable diseases and safeguard their shot records from unforeseen disaster.

Did You Know?

Immunization is one of the few clinical preventive services that saves dollars as well as lives. For each birth cohort vaccinated with 7 vaccines (DTaP, Td, Hib, Polio, MMR, Hep B, Varicella) routinely included in the schedule*:

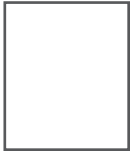
- 33,000 lives are saved.
- 14 million cases of disease are prevented.
- Direct health care costs are reduced by \$9.9 billion.
- Society saves \$33.4 billion in indirect costs.

* Source: Zhou, et al., *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 2005

Tech Tips

Q: I’ve heard that the new system-certified 680 is now out. What’s the best way for my staff to learn about this new feature and set it up to work in our office?

A: Currently the best training resource available is on the training system <https://www.flshots.com/flshotrain/Signin.csp>. Your organization administrator will need to go to his or her personnel lists to set up permissions for authorized names to be used as signatures on the form (in the top section of the maintenance page). The administrator will also need to set up who will be allowed to use those names to sign the forms (in the system user section). Setting up these roles will impact what individuals can see and do on the Form 680 page.



The Florida Department of Health Bureau of Immunization
Bin A-11, 4052 Bald Cypress Way
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1719

Welcome Aboard!



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: (BACK ROW) Laura Raimondi, Elizabeth Vega, W. Sonja Sewell, Thea Lipka, Susannah Bultron, Adalis Acevedo (FRONT ROW) Carla Jones and Theresa Conner at Pediatric Healthcare Alliance – South Tampa.

We here at Florida SHOTS would like to wish a warm welcome to all of the new practices that enrolled during the months of May and June 2007. We spoke with one of those new users, Sonja Sewell, Site Manager at Pediatric Healthcare Alliance—South Tampa, about the registry. This office has been around for 54 years and has served three generations of patients. Here's what Sonja had to say:

"Florida SHOTS is so awesome. At first it's a little time consuming entering data, but it's so much more convenient once the information is entered. Shot records are legible because they are printed, and we find information from Florida SHOTS that we use to update our own office system.

At our office, we've implemented Florida SHOTS in a variety of ways. People here enter shots daily. We pull today's visits ahead of time to enter the previous shots. We also work a day or two ahead of visits to enter historical data. Additionally, staff pull charts randomly and enter shots then mark the charts with Florida SHOTS stickers so that we know the information is now in the registry. Lastly, we put new shots in at checkout.

If another doctor's office were to ask why they should enroll, I would tell them that Florida SHOTS is so handy and convenient. If any children have had shots in Florida, we can retrieve their information. It makes tracking down shots easier, especially when schools are closed."

Upload Update

We've passed the 5 million mark! As of June 30, 2007, we've uploaded 5,001,528 shots into the registry.

Call 877-888-SHOT or visit the Data Exchange page in the Resources section of www.flshots.com to learn more about private provider data upload, a process that exports immunization information from current electronic files and transfers them for import into the Florida SHOTS registry.

YES, please contact me to schedule a visit with a regional coordinator to enroll in Florida SHOTS.

Sign me up for electronic copies of *SHOTS Tracker*.

EMAIL 1: _____

EMAIL 2: _____

CONTACT NAME: _____

OFFICE NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

COUNTY: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ FAX: _____

EMAIL: _____

NL:V3:14

How Do I Enroll in Florida SHOTS?

SIGN UP TODAY!

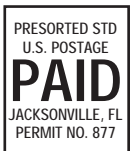
Fill out this information card and mail it back to us. Please include proper postage.

Call **(877) 888-SHOT**, or send an email to the help desk at flshots@doh.state.fl.us if you need more information.

So many enrollment options... and they're all FREE!



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Tallahassee, FL 32399-1719



Now Available Online:

Easy Enrollment Form

www.flshots.com

Top 10 Spotlight

We'd like to commend the following practices for hitting our "Top 10 by Daily Usage" chart as of June 29, 2007. Thank you for your support of the registry!

Traditional Partners:

1. Pediatric Professional Associates—Miami
2. Island Pediatrics—Orange Park
3. Altamonte Pediatrics—Altamonte Springs
4. Family Health Centers of Southwest Florida—Ft. Myers
5. Alliance Pediatrics—Gainesville

Upload Partners:

1. Pediatric Associates PA—Lauderdale Lakes
2. Florida Health Care Plans—Holly Hill
3. Children's Medical Center III—Hollywood
4. US Air Force Immunizations Clinic—Eglin AFB
5. Milla Pediatrics—Gainesville

