The Immunization Initiative (the “Initiative”) continues to advocate for Massachusetts children and adolescents to be fully immunized against vaccine preventable diseases. The Initiative develops and participates in activities, communication outreach to and educational programs for healthcare providers and the public. The Initiative also participates in collaborative efforts and coalitions which aim to improve Massachusetts immunization rates.

Educational Activities

During 2018, the Initiative sponsored or participated in more than 19 educational activities with more than 2,300 participants. The activities included annual conferences and meetings, coalition presentations, Grand Rounds seminars, general immunization updates, webinars, and outreach activities with groups such as the Massachusetts Adult Immunization Coalition (MAIC), Massachusetts Coalition for HPV/HPV-Related Cancers Awareness, Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children (MAEYC) and Massachusetts PTA (Mass PTA).

Educational activity highlights during 2018 include:

- Grand Rounds seminars held throughout Massachusetts (6 seminars; approximately 195 participants).
- Immunization Initiative Webinar Series (8 webinars; 738 participants). The webinar recordings, presentations and additional resources were posted to the MCAAP website for access by Chapter members and the pediatric healthcare professionals.
- Co-sponsorship of the 23rd Annual Massachusetts Immunization Action Partnership Pediatric Immunization Skills Building Conference with the MDPH (October; 418 participants). The conference presentations were posted on the Chapter website for access by Chapter members and the public.
- Initiation of the MCAAP-MDPH Vaccine Confidence Project. The goal of the Vaccine Confidence Project is to increase vaccine confidence throughout Massachusetts to ensure that all citizens are fully protected against serious, vaccine-preventable disease. People who lack vaccine confidence are more likely to seek exemptions to school required immunizations. Areas with higher rates of school exemptions may have more unimmunized people, which leave both individuals and communities more susceptible to cases and possible outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases. Massachusetts school immunization rates and corresponding exemption rates were used to identify areas of Massachusetts which may be lacking vaccine confidence. Since there are pockets of higher exemption rates in certain areas of Massachusetts, including Berkshire, Franklin and Hampshire counties, this area was targeted by the project. During 2018, meetings were held with key constituencies, including providers, local public health, school nurses, parent advocates and other partners to get their feedback to identify the challenges that they encounter with vaccine hesitancy.
and refusal in their communities. The next step will be to create training modules and resource materials that can be used to address these concerns and issues, and to extend outreach to other areas of the state which have higher than average vaccine exemption rates.

- Initiative participation in human papillomavirus (HPV) and immunization coalition events, conferences, general immunization presentations, Mass PTA-sponsored conferences.
- Initiative participation in CDC-sponsored campaigns, including National Infant Immunization Week (April), and National Immunization Awareness Month (August) and National Influenza Vaccination Week (December).

**Advocacy Activities**

During 2018, the Immunization Initiative monitored state legislative activities for any proposed legislation related to immunization. The Initiative also monitored the Massachusetts Department of Public Health for any changes in regulations related to immunizations.

The Initiative also monitored national legislative activities which affect Massachusetts. In March 2018, the Initiative issued a “Call to Action” for sign-on to comment developed by Every Child by Two (ECBT) in response to a proposed HHS rule for “statutory conscience rights in health care.” The proposed rule could affect providers who won’t treat or who dismiss families who claim a religious exemption to vaccination. If the proposed rule were accepted, providers could be punished for refusing to treat patients who are not vaccinated due to religious beliefs. Additional consequences of the proposed rule could be a decrease in school immunization rates, an undermining of public health efforts to protect children against vaccine preventable diseases, and interference with hospital programs which require healthcare workers to be immunized against influenza. In addition to MCAAP/Immunization Initiative sign-on, members of our Massachusetts immunization community signed on to the comment.

**Communications Activities**

The Initiative maintains web pages within the MCAAP web site at the following links: [https://mcaap.org/immunization-initiative/](https://mcaap.org/immunization-initiative/). In December 2018, the MCAAP completed a soft launch of an updated website. The updated site is fresh, visually attractive and easily searchable.

The updated website includes a webpage for the Vaccine Confidence Project ([https://mcaap.org/immunization-initiative/vaccine-confidence-project/](https://mcaap.org/immunization-initiative/vaccine-confidence-project/)).

The HPV Vaccination Initiative web page ([https://mcaap.org/immunization-initiative/immunization-hpv/](https://mcaap.org/immunization-initiative/immunization-hpv/)) was created in 2014 and was updated on an ongoing basis. The webpage includes Massachusetts HPV Vaccination Initiative information, updated clinical information, provider resources, handouts for patients and parents, professional education for providers, and news releases.

The Initiative published the “Shot Clock” quarterly as a part of the MCAAP’s publication, The Forum ([https://mcaap.org/newsletters/](https://mcaap.org/newsletters/)). The Initiative also published a monthly Initiative e-newsletter for Chapter members and healthcare providers.

The Initiative also utilized MCAAP social media channels (@MassChapterAAP) to communicate key messages and current immunization information to its members and pediatric healthcare professionals.
The Initiative utilized the Forum, monthly e-newsletter, social media and website, as well as the Immunization Initiative listserv to communicate information from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) to its target audience. The Initiative also disseminated updated immunization information from organizations, such as Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), Immunization Action Coalition (IAC), and National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID).

**Immunization Initiative Advisory Committee Meetings and Other Meeting Participation**

The Initiative Advisory Committee met in January, April and September, to discuss current immunization issues. The Immunization Initiative Director (representing the MCAAP) and several Advisory Committee members also participated on the MDPH-sponsored Massachusetts Vaccine Advisory Council (MVPAC). MVPAC held one meeting in June 2018.

The Initiative also participated in other Chapter committee meetings, such as the MCAAP Pediatric Council.

The Initiative continues to be a pediatric immunization resource for Chapter members and nonmembers, by providing immunization resource materials to these groups as requested. It also continues to build coalitions with public and private organizations which share the Initiative’s mission.

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Posted May 2019