

Conference Abstract

Leveraging partnerships in order to increase notifiable disease reporting

Jessica Grippo, MPH¹, and Amber Erickson, MPH²

¹DeKalb County Board of Health; ²North Central Health District

Corresponding author: Jessica Grippo • DeKalb County Board of Health • 445 Winn Way, Decatur, GA 30030 • 404-508-7851 • Jessica.grippo@dph.ga.gov

Background: Notifiable disease reporting, although required by law, does not always occur. For this reason, it is crucial for local public health agencies to leverage new partnerships for reporting of notifiable diseases. Schools represent sites within communities that experience relatively high numbers of cases of notifiable disease and clusters of illness. By leveraging partnerships with schools, an increase in disease reporting can occur within communities.

Methods: DeKalb County Board of Health has developed an infectious disease protocol for the two major school systems in the county and one large private school: DeKalb County School District, City Schools of Decatur and the Waldorf School of Atlanta. This protocol was developed to outline each party's responsibilities regarding disease reporting, surveillance and infection control within the schools. This protocol template was then used to develop an infectious disease protocol in partnership with two county school districts and a university within the North Central Health District and in a private school system in the DeKalb Health District.

Results: Through education of notifiable disease reporting, the health district developed and implemented two protocols and has three pending protocols with schools. This has improved the relationships between the health district and the school systems through better communication and surveillance within the schools.

Conclusions: Response to public health situations requires coordination across multiple sectors and effective use of existing resources within communities. It is essential for local public health agencies to build innovative partnerships that can then form the foundations for an increase in notifiable disease reporting and disease surveillance.

Key words: notifiable disease, partnerships, schools

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