



## University of Alabama Huntsville Family Medicine Residency\* Huntsville, AL

Program Director: **Mary Margaret Crestani, MD**  
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No. of Residents: **37 residents**  
Patient Base: **15,375 all ages**  
Reporting Period: **April 2009 through March 2010**  
Number Audited: **404 children ages 19 -35 months**

The most difficult barriers we had to overcome were:

- improving baseline knowledge
- keeping up to date with frequently changing immunization recommendations
- the use of missed opportunities to immunize patients.

These barriers are being overcome by several successful system interventions.

### BEST PRACTICES

**Standing orders for all immunizations.** Standing orders for all immunizations have been implemented and the nursing staff is encouraged to utilize them. Daily office schedules automatically remind the nursing staff to check the immunization status of patients in the age range of 19-35 months and serve as a reminder to implement the standing orders.

**Immunization updates for clinicians.** Immunization updates for clinicians occur monthly at the Family Medicine business meeting, resident meeting, or noon conferences. An abundance of laminated immunization schedules are located in the Family Medicine Center and are also distributed to physicians.

**Use of State Immunization Registry.** The utilization of ImmPrint, the state immunization registry, has also improved the documentation of immunizations received at other healthcare facilities.

**Templates to Document Hepatitis B vaccination.** EMR Well Child visit templates include reminders to document the newborn Hepatitis B vaccination that may have occurred in the hospital setting. These reminders have dramatically improved the documentation of newborn Hepatitis B vaccinations.

**Quarterly Provider Reports.** While the systems implemented have improved the immunization rates, the most significant intervention to keep attention focused on the importance of recognizing and utilizing opportunities to immunize patients has been the quarterly provider feedback reports. Every physician is provided with their individual quarterly immunization rates and a list of their patients who were seen in the most recent quarter and are delinquent with their immunizations.

Physicians are encouraged to perform a chart review to verify the data and either contact their patients by phone or place a reminder in the patient record to address delinquent immunizations at the next office visit. In addition, postcards are mailed to the parents of children identified as being delinquent with immunizations as a result of the quarterly reports.

**Recognition.** Regular recognition and praise is given to the physician with the highest immunization rate in each level of training and to the nursing staff in each nursing area who gives the greatest number of immunizations. The combination of these relatively simple interventions has led to high immunization rates while creating challenges, fun, and a sense of accomplishment for everyone in the Family Medicine Center.