

# Measles and MMR Vaccine Communication During NY Outbreak: CDC Lessons Learned

Modified deck for vaccine hesitancy workgroup

April 22, 2019

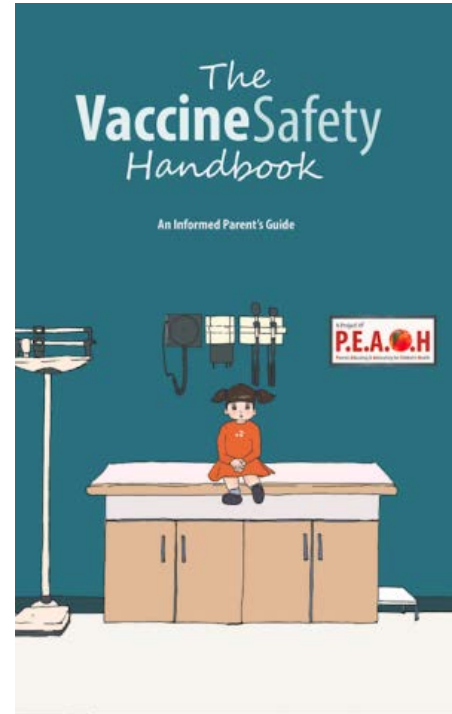
# Meetings we attended

- **Monday, April 8: Albany**
  - New York State Department of Health initial briefing
  - Data and Surveillance
  - Anthropology
  - Communications and media
- **Tuesday, April 9: Rockland County**
  - Refuah Health Center
- **Wednesday, April 10: Rockland County**
  - Weekly NY state measles call with affected counties
  - Rockland County Department of Health
- **Wednesday, April 10 continued**
  - Rockland County communications and media
  - Shoshana Bernstein
  - Rabbi Horowitz
  - Hillcrest Pediatrics
- **Thursday, April 11: Orange County**
  - Orange County Department of Health
  - Dr. Werzberger
  - Hudson Valley School Administrators
  - Ezra Choilim Health Center
- **Friday, April 12: Brooklyn**
  - Blima Marcus



# In this community, vaccine perceptions look like this...

- Jewish-affiliated group Parents Teaching and Advocating for Children's Health (PEACH) heavily promotes anti-vaccine materials in the Orthodox community
  - Their handbook includes sections such as “How to Prevent Your Children from Being Damaged by Vaccines” and “Halachic Points of Interest”
- Local newspaper headlines:
  - *Anti-Vaccine Myths Among Ultra-Orthodox Help Fuel Historic Measles Outbreak* (The Forward, April 9<sup>th</sup>)
  - *Health Department Issues Commissioner's Orders to All Yeshivas in Williamsburg to Exclude Unvaccinated Students to Face Violations and Possible Closure* (The Jewish Voice, April 9<sup>th</sup>)
  - *No, Jews Aren't Anti-Vaccination* (Jewish Week, April 10<sup>th</sup>)
  - *Anti-Vaccine Pamphlet Targeting New York Parents Cites Leading Orthodox Rabbis* (The Forward, April 10<sup>th</sup>)
  - *Lawsuit Planned to Challenge NYC's Vaccination Order* (Yeshiva World News, April 11<sup>th</sup>)



**What we have learned about health care providers and parents about vaccine attitudes and information sources**

# Audience profile

- Women are the sole decision-makers about kids' health
- Arranged marriage occurs beginning at age 18; child rearing begins immediately
- Family size often up to 10-14 children
- Younger mothers more vaccine-hesitant than older mothers
- Some delay vaccines until school-age requirement
- Community values treatment but does not prioritize prevention
- Values
  - Children's marriageability
  - Kids being in school (having all the kids home all day is overwhelming)

# Beliefs about measles and MMR vaccine

- About measles
  - “Like chickenpox with a runny nose”
  - Can cure eczema
  - Prevents cancer
  - Vitamins can help prevent measles
- Fears about MMR vaccine
  - Autism
  - Cerebral Palsy
  - Toxic ingredients
  - Doctors are paid by CDC
  - Live vaccines aren’t safe
  - “Children who got vaccinated aren’t as clever”

# Influencers

- Other moms in their communities
  - In some cases, they were listening to friends about not vaccinating, but not to their own mothers about vaccinating
- Conference calls and call-in lines
- Local newspapers/magazines
- Healthcare professionals
- Rabbis
  - Mostly in urgent situations, but not for preventative care
- Robo-calls

# Health care professional insights

## ■ Guiding principles and lessons learned

- Many kids initially got immunized, but “final holdouts” are not vaccinating
- Discussion and education are taking longer than in the past. Physicians starting to feel burned out
  - Some practices have stopped taking unvaccinated patients
- Health care professionals are still the most trusted source of vaccine information and advice for most parents
- Parents may delay vaccines, especially when child is ill
- Refuah Health Center has taken on a comprehensive approach to “attack this from all angles”
  - Empowered all staff to talk about vaccines
  - Educated staff on motivational interviewing and presumptive approach
  - Pulled providers’ vaccination rates and shared



# Parent insights

- **Guiding principles and lessons learned**
  - Some parents in these communities might have vaccinated older children, but have decided not to vaccinate younger children
  - Many parents have vague/general worries or concerns about vaccines
  - There are some anecdotal reports of families with cases not seeking medical attention—leading health professionals to believe that this outbreak is much larger than it appears
  - Teachers may be advising girls in high schools against vaccinating
  - Some moms are delaying MMR or may get MMR, but refuse other vaccines (long-term implications involved)

**Take away messages**

# Take Away Messages

- Parents fall along a continuum; this is usually not an “either/or” decision
- The healthcare professional is the most important source of information, but don’t ignore other social influences
- Questions and concerns do not equal lack of confidence; vaccinating is still the norm
- There is no quick fix message; one-on-one education and grassroots partnerships are the key
- Need more scientifically accurate information about vaccines
- Need data about measles complications in this outbreak

**Next steps**

# Next steps

- Reaching out to medical, rabbinical, and camp associations
- Meeting of HCP groups in the area
  - Connecting pediatricians to print outlets to help spread credible information
  - Providing CDC resources
- Material repackaging
  - Making more of our digital resources print friendly, plain language, and culturally appropriate
  - Providing audio resources or scripts
  - Making CDC MDs available for interviews/information as requested
  - Zip drive of measles disease and vaccination resources
  - Matte articles for local newspapers/magazines

## Next steps (continued)

- Supporting FQHCs and community leaders in efforts to spread accurate information
- Providing assistance (PHAs) to Rockland County
- CDC in Incident Command structure
  - Additional resources available
  - Coordinating with additional states with large Orthodox Jewish population
  - CDC call regional meeting of affected states
    - CDC to share NY city information/resources with NY state