OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY
Through the Flu Prevention Workgroup of the Arkansas Immunization Action Coalition, the immunization program is involved in putting together a toolkit for community and faith-based organizations to conduct their own flu prevention workshops.

BACKGROUND/IMPETUS FOR THE ACTIVITY
The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) received a small grant to promote flu vaccination to hard-to-reach audiences through faith-based organizations. The ADH Medical Director for Immunizations is also the ADH Medical Advisor for Health Literacy and Communication. Through previous health literacy activities, she was familiar with a workshop called “Let’s Talk About the Flu,” developed by Wisconsin Health Literacy, that was delivered by literacy instructors to community members. The team working on the grant decided to adapt the Wisconsin workshop for use in Arkansas. The goal was to develop easily understandable materials that community groups could use to educate the people they serve about flu prevention in the communities where they live.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
The team working on the grant presented the project to the Flu Prevention Workgroup and enlisted their involvement. The grant team included a professor of public health at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) with a long-standing relationship with the faith-based community in Arkansas. The professor worked with her contacts in the faith-based community in eastern Arkansas to adapt the Wisconsin materials for use in Arkansas. The adapted materials were pilot tested by members of the Workgroup through their organizations. The end-product was an online toolkit that leaders of any community or faith-based organization could use to plan and host an hour-long workshop for the people they serve. The toolkit provides easy-to-understand, plain language materials with the goal of increasing flu vaccination among the respective community members, many of whom live in impoverished areas with low health literacy.

The toolkit includes information on setting up and advertising the workshops, conducting the workshops, and a post-workshop debrief form to send in to the coalition. The toolkit also contains tips for arranging an on-site flu shot clinic through local pharmacies or medical clinics. These materials are designed to be used by any organization that conducts outreach in their community (e.g., churches, geriatric clinics). Some of the materials have versions that are Christian-specific for faith-based organizations.

ROLE OF IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM AND OTHER AGENCIES/GROUPS INVOLVED
The toolkit is an effort of the Flu Prevention Workgroup of the Arkansas Immunization Action Coalition, whose members include representatives from the coalition, the immunization program, and the College of Public Health at UAMS.
DISSEMINATION
The toolkit is available on the immunization coalition website. In addition, paper copies of the easy-to-read booklet for use by workshop participants are available free of charge through the Arkansas Department of Health Immunization Program.

INTERSECTION WITH OTHER PROGRAM ACTIVITIES
The workshop was initially publicized as part of a student project by a student in the UAMS College of Public Health. It has also been publicized by the ADH Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities.

FUNDING
This activity grew out of a small CDC-funded grant provided through Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), with support from the Emory Interfaith Health Program, to the Arkansas Department of Health. This grant was used to print hardcopies of the booklets for use by the workshop participants. Additional funding from the same source will be used to develop a Spanish-language version of the workshop.

STAFFING
The immunization program oversees the grant and participates on the workgroup. The ADH Medical Director of Immunizations provides direction and technical assistance regarding immunizations and health literacy to the workgroup for this project.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS
The workshop toolkit is available online through the Arkansas Immunization Action Coalition, and printed copies of the participant booklets are available from ADH. Additional tools are being developed, such as a Spanish-language version, a toolkit on adult immunizations (expanding beyond flu vaccine), and materials for other faiths (e.g., Muslim).

SUCCESSES
- Several workshops were offered around Arkansas during the fall 2015 through the Centers on Aging, and the evaluations were positive.

CHALLENGES
- The workshop is designed to be given in the fall of each year. Last fall, the most significant challenge was loss of leadership and oversight for this project due to changes in staff/leaders in the Arkansas Immunization Action Coalition and Flu Prevention Workgroup. In addition, the lead student on the project moved out of state. These changes made it difficult to promote use of the toolkit in a timely manner and to provide the type of coaching support needed to make organizations aware of the toolkit.
OTHER LESSONS LEARNED/ADVICE TO OTHER PROGRAMS

- The Emory/ASTHO document on public health and faith community partnerships (see Relevant Resources below) provides valuable guidance that could be applied to other organizations and communities.

RELEVANT RESOURCES

- Arkansas Toolkit materials: http://www.immunizear.com/#/flupreventiontoolkit/c1mh

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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