

SnapShots

IMMUNIZATION REGISTRY NEWS *from* AMERICAN IMMUNIZATION REGISTRY ASSOCIATION (AIRA)

Welcome to *SnapShots*, AIRA's newsletter about the progress, best practices, and accomplishments of immunization information systems (IIS).

We invite you to share news about your registry. Email aira@immregistries.org or call us at 202-527-7000 with information about a successful programmatic or technical innovation, major accomplishment, or milestone that your registry has reached.

SnapShots is sent to subscribers every four months and posted on the AIRA website. Please share *SnapShots* with others who may benefit from a reliable source of immunization registry news and information. **TO SUBSCRIBE**, send an email to aira@immregistries.org. Your information will remain confidential and will not be sold or passed on to other parties.

SnapShots is produced by the AIRA Education Committee.

Editor: **Katie Reed, NY**

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello, *AIRA community*! Spring is here, and it is showering us with exciting new projects and opportunities. As most of you have heard, AIRA is planning a national IIS meeting scheduled for **October 7–9, 2013, in Denver, Colorado**. If you haven't yet made plans to attend, please mark your calendars for two and a half days of learning and sharing with your peers. And best of all, it's not too late to submit an abstract! The abstract deadline is May 7, so take this opportunity to write about the budding or thriving work within your IIS. The theme of this year's conference is *"Opportunities, Integration and Sustainability."* We look forward to seeing you in October for this dynamic meeting.

The AIRA Board of Directors has spent the early part of spring working on a new Strategic Plan to help guide our community through the coming years. The entire Board came together in Portland, Oregon from March 12–14, and spent two full days immersed in planning and visioning. This was the first time the current AIRA Board had all been in one room together, and it was thrilling to share the energy and organic exchanges that can only happen through face-to-face meetings.

Through this process, the Board recognized that it was time to update our organization's Mission, so a new AIRA Mission Statement has been drafted:

*Promote and support the use of immunization information
to ensure healthy communities.*

In addition, the group drafted five overarching goals that will be more fully fleshed out with objectives and strategies:

- Increase Financial Capacity
- Ensure Organizational Stability
- Maintain Role As Leading Authority
- Support Our Members
- Fully Engage Community and Partners

The third day of the meeting was spent with two of our CDC partners, Warren Williams and Laura Pabst, exchanging ideas about the draft plan and how we might best operationalize it in the context of our current climate of competing priorities. Objectives and strategies are still being finalized, but the Board will share the full Strategic Plan with the entire community as soon as it is complete. Thanks to Frank Caniglia (PA) and the Strategic Planning Committee for coordinating a wonderful and productive three-day meeting.

This edition of *SnapShots* details many other projects blooming across our community. An article from Dina Hoefer (NYS) reviews an exciting meeting held with industry partners in New Orleans about 2D barcode use on vaccines. Nathan Bunker writes about the Bi-Directional Standards meeting held in February in Atlanta. And Sue Salkowitz shares with us her experience watching first hand India's approach to Polio eradication.

May will also see our final ExIS sites go live with their interface to CDC's VTrckS system, completing a several-years-long transition as our community moves more deeply into the role of supporting Vaccine Management. By the end of May, approximately two thirds of all IIS will be using their ExIS to transfer data to VTrckS. This move signals a far greater level of integration within many Immunization Programs, and speaks to the critical role IIS now play in supporting program needs.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Continued

Like springtime, our community is bursting with new life and energy as IIS continue to expand our central role in the immunization world. Now more than ever, AIRA is helping to keep us connected and in sync with each other as we grow and expand. Thanks to all of you across the community who share your expertise and knowledge through AIRA committees, webinars, projects, and meetings; you are the thousand flowers blooming this spring that make our work more efficient and successful!

All the best,
Mary Beth Kurilo

— Mary Beth Kurilo, AIRA President
IIS Director, Oregon ALERT IIS

AIRA 2013 National IIS Meeting Set for October 7–9 in The Mile High City

AIRA will host the 2013 National IIS Meeting on **October 7–9, 2013, in Denver, Colorado**, at the Embassy Suites Denver. This meeting will bring together IIS staff, IIS vendors, EHR vendors, CDC, CMS, and international stakeholders to discuss relevant topics such as Interoperability, EHRs and Bidirectionality; IIS data quality and use; Meaningful Use; the role of HIEs; HL7 implementation; Vaccine

Accountability; Training for IIS Users; IIS Functionality; Clinical Decision Support; Collaborative/Open source work across IIS; and Sustainable funding strategies to name just a few of the key presentation areas. The meeting will also offer an excellent opportunity for information sharing among all attendees.

Stay tuned for more information about meeting sponsorship, coming soon! And be sure to **save the dates, October 7–9, 2013**. We hope to see all of you at the meeting! ■

— Katie Reed, HP



AIRA 2013
IIS NATIONAL
MEETING

IIS & Public Health:
Opportunities, Integration
and Sustainability

OCTOBER 7–9 | DENVER, CO
EMBASSY SUITES DENVER



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AIRA 2013 IIS Meeting: CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

A Call for Abstracts was sent out broadly on March 25 and all submissions are due on **Tuesday, May 7 at 11:59PM EDT**. Click on the link at the left to view the meeting page and abstract submission information. **AIRA is also looking for qualified volunteers to review the abstracts**. If you are interested please **CLICK HERE** to fill out and submit your application by May 7.

First Hand Look at Polio Immunization Days in India

Sue and Richard Salkowitz were travelling in India in January 2013 and happened to be there during their National Polio Immunization Days, a well-publicized event in the Indian press and other media. Sue learned that their strategy is saturation: to conduct the campaign on specified days and vaccinate all children whether previously vaccinated or not. Outreach methods included booths, railway stations, major temples, parks and door to door house visits by approximately 2000 workers from the Health Department, Social Welfare Department, and local volunteers.

Of note is how they track people using HRA (House Rent Allowance) records. Because, unfortunately many families live literally on the street, they utilize rag pickers and nomads to find children for whom there are no records or addresses.

India prides itself on its progress as reported in the
Continued on next page >



Above: We saw these public health nurses at work in a park outside of a shrine in Varanasi, and I stopped to take their photo and talk to them. They actually had lists – a paper registry of sorts – and were trying to attract children brought to the park by their families.

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At left: Later, we were in Southern India, in a village in Kerala, a much more prosperous, literate and less densely populated area, where we visited a day/care and health center. The polio campaign was still on and these nurses were giving the children oral polio vaccines. On the campaign posters were the logos of sponsors such as Rotary International, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Unicef, WHO, and CDC. The campaign vaccinated 130,554 children up to five years old.

India Times:

“India recently marked a major milestone: two years without a single new case of polio. As recently as 2009, India accounted for nearly half of the world’s polio cases, but today we have polio on the run.”

(As observed by Sue Salkowitz and reported in *The Times of India: National Immunization Days for Pulse Polio observed on Jan 20, 21*, Shimona Kanwar, TNN January 24, 2013, 06.03PM IST) ■

— Submitted by Sue Salkowitz, AIRA Member

More than 90% of providers are represented by the 47 awardees that will order vaccine through the IIS or another external system (ExIS).

VTckS: The Transition Continues

May 2013 marks an important milestone. It is the date when all awardees will track inventory and order vaccine through VTckS. The accomplishment is a significant step toward the goal of efficient ordering and tracking of publicly funded vaccines. At the same time they transitioned to VTckS, many awardees also implemented new functionality that allows providers enrolled in their IIS to order vaccines through the IIS. **Providers** in these jurisdictions interact with a single system – the IIS – to document vaccine administrations as well as to track inventory and order vaccine. **Awardee staff** in these jurisdictions keep their IIS and VTckS in sync by transferring vaccine inventory and order data between the two systems.

Now that all awardees have transitioned to VTckS, they ensure that VTckS has all required information a) for orders to arrive at provider locations during business hours and to the attention of the proper person, and b) to record returns properly. Required, recommended, and optional information for VTckS is noted in the document of the same name, which can be found on the web in CDC’s the VTckS Training Library (<http://vtcks-library.cdc.gov/gm/folder-1.11.5728?mode=EU>).

Remaining activities related to transition, if any, depend on whether the awardee is using an ExIS solution or planning to enroll providers to order vaccine directly through VTckS. ExIS awardees that transitioned to VTckS before completing all enhancements to their IIS will enter orders in VTckS on behalf of providers until their ExIS solution becomes available. VTckS Direct awardees are enrolling or planning to enroll providers to track inventory and order vaccine on VTckS.

Regarding the transition of ExIS awardees, consider these numbers. More than 90% of providers are represented by the 47 awardees that will order vaccine through the IIS or another external system (ExIS). A total of 32 awardees are receiving PPHF funding specifically for building their ordering and inventory tracking functionality. Some PPHF funding recipients are nearing the completion of their project goals and some will make improvements through summer of 2014.

Awardees that have successfully deployed their ExIS solution continue to find ways to ensure that vaccine orders are approved, delivered successfully to providers, and stored properly until administration. Changes to their IIS towards this end include online provider enrollments, updating the list of vaccines available for ordering by importing the Federal Vaccines List, influenza vaccine pre-booking, use of EHR / EMR in decrementing inventory, and inventory reconciliation. Because provider training is another key component of an effective transition, awardees are developing webinars, online training, and in-person sessions.

Congratulations to all involved in meeting the major milestone of VTckS deployment and congratulations to all that have successfully implemented an ExIS solution or have begun to enroll providers directly on VTckS. ■

— Submitted by Janet Fath, IISB, CDC

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45 out of 56 identified IIS indicated that they would like to participate in the status check.

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The forum was an opportunity to engage the IIS community in presentations and discussions on the implications and challenges of implementing 2D barcoding technology.

IIS Interoperability Status Check

The Immunization Information System Support Branch (IISSB) began the IIS Interoperability Status Check in December of 2012 with a goal of identifying how many IIS were ready to accept HL7 v2.5.1 messages and what technical gaps remain nationally. The data collection phase of this project was completed on March 31st. The final report is being written and will be available to the community soon.

Background

Electronic Health Record (EHR) systems that wish to certify as supporting Meaningful Use stage 2 objectives must be able to demonstrate support for seven identified test scenarios for sending immunization related data. These test scenarios were developed in the summer of 2012 with cooperation from experts within the IIS community. Now in 2013, EHR system vendors are building support for these scenarios and are beginning to deploy these upgraded EHR systems in the field. These changes are good news for IIS who have long looked for EHRs to consistently and fully support immunization data reporting.

Status Check Project

Now that EHR systems will soon be sending upgraded messages to IIS, it is important to ensure that IIS are ready to receive these messages. The IIS Interoperability Status Check project was designed to connect with IIS across the U.S., submit sample MU stage 2 messages, and verify that they can be accepted. In this way, the project would be able to verify how close IIS are to being ready to accept these messages.

IIS Participation

Interest in participating in the project was high. In total, 45 out of 56 identified IIS indicated that they would like to participate in the status check.

Final Report

Data collection has been completed, and the final report is being written. The results of the status check will be shared with the AIRA community as soon as possible. ■

— Source: Nathan Bunker, Dandelion Software

2D Vaccine Barcode Pilot's Educational Forum

The 2D Vaccine Barcode Pilot's Educational Forum was held in New Orleans, LA, on April 14-15, 2013. The forum was an opportunity to engage the immunization community in presentations and discussions on the implications and challenges of implementing 2D barcoding technology on vaccine products, on the inventory management and administration workflows, and on vaccine information statement (VIS) sheets. Attendees of the forum included over 75 persons from provider practices, state and city Immunization Information Systems (IIS) staff, vaccine manufacturers and distributors, EMR and IIS vendors, and experts in the development of 2D barcode structure.

This forum was part of a pilot project initiated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in response to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently released final "Guidance for Industry: Bar Code Label Requirements – Questions and Answers" and a study on the impact of 2D barcoded vaccines. Ten IIS participated in the pilot, and six IIS have also received Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF) grants to adopt and implement scanning technologies between now and 2014. During the forum CDC discussed the 2D Barcode Implementation Pilot Project initiated in September 2011, the lessons learned, and early Pilot findings. Findings from the Pilot will be finalized and widely distributed soon.

In addition to pilot project findings and discussions, presentations were given on the history of 2D barcoding and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), an overview of 2D barcode technology, and an overview of VIS and progress in transitioning to VIS statements with barcodes. Two 'Expert Panels' gave the forum the opportunity to discuss inventory management and workflow benefits as well as an overview of the role of EMR/IIS vendors and progress made to date. Finally, breakout sessions gave the group a chance to focus on three key topics: Standards, Adoptions, and Implementation.

More information on the 2D Barcode pilot can be found at <http://2dbarcodepilot.com/>. ■

— Submitted by Dina Hoefer, NYSIIS

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One of the
primary
motivations for
the meeting was
to examine what
standards could
be recommended
for Stage 3
Meaningful Use
regulations.

Bidirectional Query Exchange Workgroup

In February of 2013, the Public Health Informatics Institute (PHII), convened a working group meeting of EHR and IIS experts to identify, define and document a standardized use case for bi-directional query immunization information exchange. This two day face-to-face meeting, held at the PHII offices in Decatur, GA, included 24 experts with backgrounds in IIS, national policy, and EHR systems. In addition, external experts with EHR backgrounds who were unable to travel to the meeting participated remotely in sections of the face-to-face meeting and were able to give input into the final result.

One of the primary motivations for the meeting was to examine what standards could be recommended for Stage 3 Meaningful Use regulations. While the decisions of this work group are not binding nor definitive, they give a good indication of the general viewpoint and position of both the IIS and EHR community concerning immunization data exchange standards.

During the two-day meeting the work group members were assigned to one of these four focus areas:

1. **Adoption of Standards:** How to encourage and ensure that IIS and EHR systems are using national standards.
2. **Transport & Security:** Practice and standards around connecting EHR and IIS together so they can exchange messages.
3. **Patient Identification:** Processes used to allow EHR to identify the right patient in the IIS.
4. **Query for IIS Record:** Standard and format of the patient vaccination record returned by the IIS to the EHR.

The focus groups discussed the standards, made recommendations, and on the second day presented the results to the entire work group and the external reviewers. After the presentations all work group members and external reviewers were asked to give their personal response to the recommendations. From this, areas of consensus and areas that needed further discussion could be seen.

Overall the meeting indicated that much of the standardization work has been completed and that the benefit and ability of bidirectional query exchange is very well established. The IIS community has long been active and at the forefront of bi-directional exchange and is well positioned to support the increased use of bi-directional query standards.

The final report, summarizing and detailing the results of the meeting will be posted on the PHII website in April. ■

— Source: Nathan Bunker, Dandelion Software

AIRA PARTNER PROFILE

Public Health Informatics Institute (PHII)

■
The Institute
looks forward to
many more years
of working
together with
AIRA.

Here's a history question for you: Which two organizations were both birthed in the late '90s by the *All Kids Count* (AKC) program? Answer: AIRA and the PHII.

AKC was the national program funded largely by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to support the initial development of immunization registries. PHII had served as the National Program Office for AKC, and used some remaining funds at the close of the initiative to support planning for the creation of AIRA. Other RWJF funds were used to support the creation of the Institute, which went on to address integrating child health information systems, to more broadly address effective use of public health information and information technology, and, most recently, to supporting countries in developing national health information infrastructures.

The Institute's connection with the immunization registry community has remained strong. The CDC's IIS Support Branch has engaged the Institute over the past eight years to provide enhanced technical assistance to IIS programs, helping them to develop strategic and business plans, migrate to new systems, or address specific challenges. The Institute also worked with the Branch and AIRA to update the IIS functional standards. Other recent projects include working with IIS staff to develop comprehensive IIS system requirements and other documentation, and finalizing work on a consensus standard for implementing bi-directional query exchange with EHRs. Currently, the Institute is working with NCIRD on convening a Blue Ribbon Panel to advise on strategic directions for IIS.

The Institute leadership shared the following thoughts: since our organizations' co-emergence from the early AKC days, the lessons we've learned together still ring true: Be clear about the work you need technology to support; plan broadly but implement incrementally; and it's better to work together than alone. The Institute looks forward to many more years of working together with AIRA. ■

AIRA Webinars – A Resource for Everyone

Did you miss the most recent webinar about capturing VFC eligibility at the dose level in an IIS? Did you participate in the IIS Transport Layer 101 webinar and wonder if there was ever a 201 offered? Well you're in luck. All of the AIRA webinars are archived in the Events section of our website.

To watch an AIRA webinar, just look here: <http://www.immregistries.org/events/past-events/webinars>. You will find them all in one place and you can just click to watch topics such as the MIROW Inventory Management Chapter, Introduction of new IIS Functional Standards, IIS Project Management 101, and of course, IIS Transport Layer 101 and 201.

And don't forget, you can always find out what's happening next in IIS by looking at the AIRA homepage or visiting the Events page. ■



SAVE the DATE

AIRA 2013 IIS NATIONAL MEETING

**IIS & Public Health:
Opportunities, Integration
and Sustainability**

OCTOBER 7-9 | DENVER, CO
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NOT A MEMBER? JOIN AIRA TODAY!

American Immunization Registry Association (AIRA) offers membership to any individual or organization, both not-for-profit and for-profit, that shares and supports its mission of preventing and controlling vaccine preventable disease by enhancing the capacity of immunization information systems (IIS). Learn more at www.immregistries.org/membership