SNAPSHOTS

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to spring and the next edition of the *SnapShots* newsletter! *SnapShots* is all about showcasing the progress, best practices, and accomplishments of immunization information systems (IIS) across the country. This edition is no exception.

In this first *SnapShots* of 2022, we're celebrating Amy Metroka, who recently retired from her role as director of the New York City Citywide Immunization Registry. Amy worked in the IIS and immunization communities for nearly three decades. This edition also includes an article from our partners at the Public Health Informatics Institute about the Transitions Learning Community, which supports programs that are transitioning to a new IIS platform or implementing other complex IT transitions. This article is chock-full of great information for IIS programs, so be sure to give it a read.

This edition's "Tech Corner" is all about networks, and how digital networks, specifically, are social networks built using digital technologies. Don't forget to also check out "Tech Corner" on the AIRA website, where we share regular posts in addition to the column in *SnapShots*.

Speaking of networks, a great way to connect as an IIS community is at the AIRA 2022 National Meeting! This year's meeting will be virtual but will still offer the same standout content we're all used to at the National Meeting. The meeting will be held on April 26 and 27, 2022. Be sure to register if you haven't already. Find more information in the article below.

Happy spring!

Regards,
Christy Gray
AIRA Board President
Director, Division of Immunization
Virginia Department of Health

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Welcome to *SnapShots*, the American Immunization Registry Association's newsletter about the progress, best practices, and accomplishments of immunization information systems (IIS) across the country. We invite you to share news about your IIS. Email us at info@ immregistries.org with information about a successful programmatic or technical innovation, major accomplishment, or milestone that your IIS has reached.

AIRA 2022 NATIONAL MEETING: COMING SOON TO A SCREEN NEAR YOU!

The AIRA 2022 National Meeting, virtual edition, is less than a month away! Join us on April 26 and 27 as members of the IIS community (like you!) convene to advance IIS together. If you haven't already, register online. Be an early bird and register by Friday, April 1 to receive a personalized snack box to munch on during the meeting.

So, what exactly can you look forward to?

Spend two days networking and hearing from professionals in the IIS community and leave recharged and empowered! We plan to bring you the same stellar content you know and love, just on a virtual platform. Check out the meeting agenda for more information.

We know a virtual meeting isn't the same as meeting in person, but there are some perks! For example:

- You can create your own dress code
- No pesky travel or TSA pat-down
- Limitless bathroom breaks
- Free, personalized snacks shipped to your doorstep (if you register by April 1)
- If you're working from home, you may even have furry co-workers to snuggle with

Find more information about the AIRA 2022 National Meeting on our National Meeting website. And if you have questions, email info@immregistries.org.

We can't wait to see you virtually in April!

AMY METROKA: A LASTING LEGACY

It's hard to find anyone in the IIS or immunization communities who doesn't know Amy Metroka. Amy has been a pillar in these communities for nearly three decades and just recently retired from her role as director of the Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR) of the New York City (NYC) Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). She'll be greatly missed, but her legacy lives on.

Before joining the NYC DOHMH, Amy was the Associate Project Director from 1992–1997 of the All Kids Count project in NYC, one of 24 jurisdictions who received grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to plan and implement immunization registries in their state, city, or region. RWJF also funded a program office at the Task Force for Child Survival (now the Task Force for Global Health) to administer All Kids Count on a national level. The task force laid the foundation for the IIS community at that time by establishing and supporting a community of practice among the 24 jurisdictions. In NYC, Amy helped the DOHMH create and carry out a comprehensive planning process for establishing a childhood immunization registry, now the CIR.

The CIR was established in 1997 when a NYC Health Code Amendment required health care providers to report all immunizations administered to children aged 0 to 7 years to the NYC DOHMH. (This requirement was later expanded to include children and adolescents aged 0 to 18 years and also became a state law.) In October of that year, Amy became director of the CIR.

Under Amy's leadership, the CIR has become one of the largest and most complex IIS in the country and now includes individuals across their lifespan. It currently includes 14 million patients with over 145 million immunizations. Over 5000 facilities report to the CIR.

She also helped form the NYC Coalition for Immunization Initiatives, which is the advisory council to DOHMH for the CIR and the core program components of the DOHMH Bureau of Immunization. The coalition was a key partner in establishing and promoting the CIR.

While Amy may be most recently known for her work in NYC and the CIR, she holds a special connection to AIRA as well. Amy is a founding member of AIRA and served as AIRA president from 2000 to 2003 and served a second term from 2013 to 2016.

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AMY METROKA: A LASTING LEGACY *Continued from page 3*

We interviewed Amy about her time in the IIS and immunization communities, and where she sees herself going in this next phase of her life.

Q: What are your fondest memories of your time working in the IIS and immunization communities?
I cherish the memories of our community's generosity in sharing lessons learned and supporting each other as we persevered over the years. I'm proud of our unending dedication to making our IIS better and better and helping each other reach our goals. I am deeply grateful for the extraordinary people I had the pleasure of working with in NYC, our IIS vendor (HLN), the New York state IIS, AIRA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Task Force for Global Health/Public Health Informatics Institute (PHII), and many individuals in IIS throughout the US and territories.

Q: What were some of the biggest challenges?
By far the most difficult part of building a successful IIS is capturing high-quality data. Because IIS depend on the immunization providers for the data, and the providers are large in number and wide in variety, it is (and will always be) a major challenge to constantly engage providers and motivate them to send our IIS complete, accurate, and timely data. Not only do we have to help providers connect to our IIS initially and ensure high-quality data is being reported from the outset, we have to monitor their data submissions closely to quickly identify and fix issues that inevitably occur and ensure they keep up with changes (e.g., new vaccine codes, changes in standards).

Q: In your view, what are the greatest accomplishments of the CIR or IIS in general?
I am most proud of IIS ability to enable clinicians on the front lines of vaccinating people everywhere to get their patients' immunization histories and recommendations (decision support) in real time while the patient is present. Clinicians love this and it supports our efforts to engage them in a collaboration to achieve high-quality data in the IIS. This was our vision in the early days, and I'm so gratified we made it a reality! I am also very proud of the critical role IIS have played in promoting the COVID-19 vaccination program in response to the pandemic.

Q: What will you miss the most about your time in the IIS and immunization communities?
I will miss the day-to-day interactions with IIS people and the ever-present and changing IIS challenges. Never a dull moment in the IIS world!

Q: What's coming up next for you?
I am doing some consulting part-time for PHII with the goal of sharing my experience and lessons learned to help advance the IIS community. In this new role, I will look forward to seeing many of you in the months ahead!

TRAINING, REQUIREMENTS, STAFFING – OH MY!

The Public Health Informatics Institute (PHII), in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), established the Transitions Learning Community (TLC) to support programs that are transitioning to a new IIS platform or implementing other complex IT transitions, such as new IIS modules, features, or functionality. After more than a yearlong hiatus, TLC is returning to continue supporting jurisdictions.

Sources and resources

In collaboration with partners, such as CDC and AIRA, PHII has developed a number of resources that would be valuable to all jurisdictions, not just ones transitioning. Whether you are evaluating your current IIS capabilities and functionalities or planning to migrate to a new platform; planning to expand your IIS team or conduct a staffing gap analysis; evaluating your current communication, training, and outreach standard operating procedures; or simply looking for ways to improve your day-to-day operations, rest assured—PHII has you covered! Access to practical and readily usable resources, such as worksheets, templates, and workbooks, is just a click away on our IIS Learning Hub.

Highlighted below are a few of the many resources PHII provides for IIS newbies and seasoned IIS veterans alike.

"Welcome to IIS" Email Course

PHII recently relaunched its "Welcome to IIS" email course, an email-based crash course that builds a basic foundation of knowledge about what IIS are, how they work, what they do, and how they are supported. This course offers a simplified, paced orientation to the complex world of IIS in an entirely virtual format, all delivered straight to your inbox over an 18-day period. This is a great course to orient new hires to the IIS world.

IIS Baseline Requirements Traceability Matrix

In the complex environment of an IIS, key system requirements can be difficult to identify and prioritize. If you're in the solicitation process, or otherwise overhauling your IIS, you don't have to reinvent the wheel on requirements!

The IIS Functional Model provides a one-page visual of the core functions, capabilities, and technical attributes of IIS. This model offers a common framework and consistent terminology for conveying what an IIS should do and how it should do it.

The corresponding IIS Baseline Requirements Traceability Matrix (RTM) provides high-level and detailed requirements within tabs aligned to each of the core functions, capabilities, and attributes in an easy-to-use spreadsheet.

TRAINING, REQUIREMENTS, STAFFING – OH MY!

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These resources can be used by immunization program and IIS staff to support procurement of IIS technology, development/enhancement and testing of IIS technology, and assessment and prioritization of areas of opportunity to enhance your IIS.

IIS staffing tools

IIS staff are one of the most crucial resources during a migration or vaccine-preventable disease outbreak. Staffing tools were created as part of the IIS Migration Toolkit and cover everything from key roles and responsibilities to staffing visualizations and planned staff allocations. The IIS staff roles matrix can help identify staffing responsibilities for key IIS roles and determine where there are gaps. It includes a sample IIS staffing model to visualize coverage for key IIS roles and identify potential gaps in coverage. Lastly, it includes a staff allocation matrix to assess current and planned staff allocations and capacity. This tool is extremely useful during times when there are vaccine surges, such as at the peak of flu season, to determine where staff will allocate their time, while still making sure the other functions of the IIS remain.

If you would like to learn more about tools and resources PHII has available, please contact Beth Cox or the PHII team.
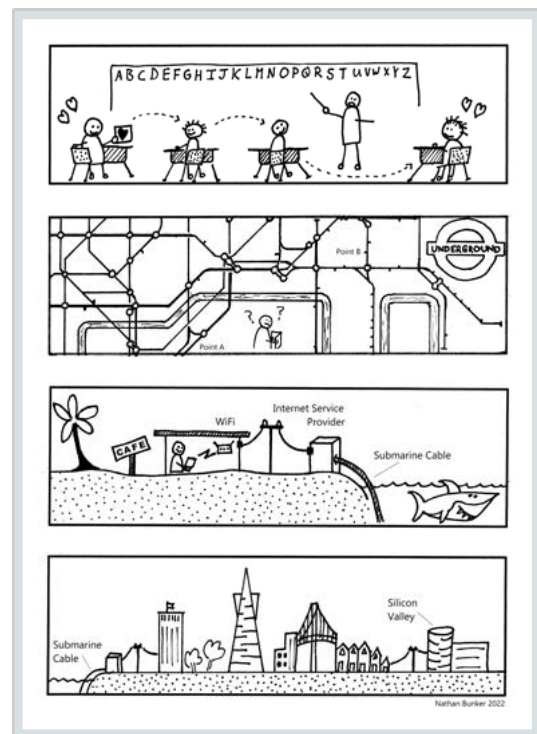
*- **Submitted by Piper Hale,** PHII*

TECH CORNER | PROVIDING PUBLIC HEALTH EXPERTS WITH PRAGMATIC EXPLANATIONS OF TECHNICAL CONCEPTS

WHAT IS A NETWORK?

A digital network is a social network built using digital technologies. Perhaps one of the most familiar examples of a digital network is the way phones and computers connect to other systems on the internet. By using webs of connected computers, digital data can be exchanged or copied rapidly and accurately across great distances.

While computers and phones are modern examples of digital networks, they are not the only model of how one functions. As shown in the first two illustrations, children in classrooms passing notes to one another or city subway systems that offer a range of options and destinations to transport travelers are both excellent, physical examples of networks that exchange information or actual people.

The internet can be thought of as a set of computers connected to each other that cooperate to send data among themselves, much like students who collectively cooperate to pass notes in the hope their classmates will, in turn, continue to pass their notes. When you visit a website or read your email, you are not directly connected to those services, but rather connected to them through a network of computers. Just as when you take a trip on a citywide subway system, you may simply say you traveled "by subway," even though you didn't stay on just one train, but actually changed trains once or twice along the way. What you see on the internet comes to you via dozens of computer systems cooperating to copy and pass your information along.

It is important to recognize none of the connections in these examples are direct or permanent. They all depend on the continued operation of the network. In the third illustration, the character in the island café is connecting to the internet via Wi-Fi. But that is only the first link in the chain. The Wi-Fi then depends on a local Internet Service Provider to forward data onward to another computer that connects to a submarine cable. Submarine cables facilitate nearly all internet traffic that goes overseas. This connection links dozens of computers on the mainland before finally arriving at the destination website or email server, as shown in the last illustration.

We depend on digital networks in public health daily to connect systems and keep them linked. Understanding how a network functions will only help to continuously strengthen the connections and create more efficient ways to work together wherever we are in the world.

The "AIRA Tech Corner" is published as a monthly blog. Read more on the AIRA website.