

Appendix A

Alameda County
Public Health Department

HWI Project
Health Worker Immunization
Development of a Communication Strategy to
Improve Influenza Vaccination Rates
Among Health Workers
**Focus Group Discussions
PLAN**

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ALAMEDA HWI PROJECT DISCUSSION GUIDE

Health Worker H1N1 Focus Groups – This is a collaborative discussion. We welcome all opinions. Especially regarding immunization – all choices are respected. There are no correct or incorrect answers. I expect that anything said inside this room remains inside this room.

Informed Consent Statement (2 min.)

This project is anonymous and no names will be reported.

The purpose of this research is to get your thoughts on health worker immunization, disease prevention, and health promotion. We will be discussing health topics and asking you some questions. The study will take no more than 1 hour.

Remember:

- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may stop at any time. You may leave at any time.
- Your answers are kept anonymous. Information collected during this discussion will be used for internal and research purposes only.
- There are no right or wrong answers. Feel free to be open and candid with your comments.
- The discussion session will be audio-recorded (for usability tests only) to help us remember the information discussed in this session. Under no circumstances will this information be made public.

Do you agree to these terms and consent to participate in this research?

Are there any questions before we begin?

(All items to appear on flipchart.)

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

- Before we get started, let's introduce ourselves to each other. Let's go around the table and tell us:
 - Your first name (or nick name)
 - Your occupation/job title
 - Did you get vaccinated for the regular seasonal flu or H1N1 last year? Where? How much did it cost?

II. Influenza Knowledge, Attitudes and Beliefs (10 minutes)

- Did any of your coworkers get the H1N1 flu or the regular seasonal flu during the 2009-10 flu season?
 - PROBE:

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- Tell me about that. How does that influence your perceptions of the seriousness of influenza?
- How do you make decisions about immunizing yourself for the flu?
 - PROBE:
 - What are your concerns about flu vaccines?
 - Are any of you considering getting the flu vaccine this year? (Why or why not?)
 - What questions would you want answered before you decided to get the vaccine?
 - Is your decision-making process different for your family?
- During the 2009-10 flu season, there was a lot of information presented to the public? What do you remember?
 - PROBE:
 - Hand washing?
 - Did any of them influence your opinions about the flu or getting immunized?

III. Reactions to Ads (5 minutes) – Hand out 8x10 copy

Put a question mark next to anything you find confusing or offensive and star next to anything you find important or useful.



I'd now like you to give me your reactions to a poster developed by the state of California.

DISPLAY AD 1:

- How many of you remember seeing this?
- Is there anything in this poster you find new or motivating?
- What stands out to you? look and feel?
- What changes would you make to the poster to make it more effective for you personally?
- Would you go to the website or call the phone number on this poster?

IV. HWI Statement Testing (15 minutes)

Some of you may be aware that flu immunization rates among health workers can vary greatly. Though yearly flu vaccines are widely hailed as a tool to protect healthcare workers and their patients, uptake rates in health worker immunizations have never before pushed past 49% on average – although some hospitals are able to maintain immunization rates above 80%.

Last year was different. Estimates are that on average last year 62% of health workers received the regular seasonal flu vaccine but just 37% received the

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H1N1 vaccine.

I'm now going to read some statements about health worker immunization. Make note of any words or statements that inspire a reaction – either positive or negative – in regards to getting immunized. We'll go through the list and then go back and discuss each one individually.

PHASE ONE STATEMENTS – These statements reflect actual opinions expressed by healthcare workers. (Note: Phase One Statements will be reviewed and iteratively adjusted after each set of 4-6 focus groups.)

1) MANDATORY IMMUNIZATION

I approve of mandatory immunizations and believe they should be required to keep me, my family, co-workers, and patients safe.

- PROBE:
 - Required by state or employer
 - Disapprove of mandatory immunization
 - Will immunize anyway
 - Refuse to immunize

Strategy – Combining the most controversial issue with the most compelling reason for immunization will start the conversation prompting statements with high probability of everyone joining in.

2) TRUST

I don't trust the flu vaccine and believe the vaccine is more dangerous than the flu.

- PROBE:
 - Who's opinion do you trust?
 - As a health worker – do you tell people that YOU got the flu shot?

3) OPTIONAL VACCINATION

Requiring workers who opt out of immunizations to wear masks when in the workplace is an appropriate measure.

- PROBE:
 - Unfair
 - Ineffective

4) FREE TO EMPLOYEES

I think my employer should freely provide immunizations and I won't get immunized unless they do.

- PROBE:

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- Affordability
- Ineffective

5) CONVENIENT

Easily and quickly getting the shot at work is one of the key factors determining IF I get immunized.

- PROBE:
 - *How early I get immunized.*

6) SAFETY

I have many questions about the safety of the flu vaccine that remain unanswered.

- PROBE:
 - True or False for YOU
 - One-on-one Counseling – to explain personal, family, and professional risk

V. Workplace Support (10 minutes)

- What kind of information do you share with your peers regarding immunization?
 - PROBE:
 - Do you get pressure from your peers regarding immunization?
- How would you rate your employer's immunization program?
 - Excellent
 - Average
 - Poor
 - PROBE:
 - What recommendations, if any, would you make to the program?

VI. FINAL OPEN ENDED QUESTION (5 minutes)

- Is there anything that you recommend health communicators NOT do?
- What do you think would be the most effective approach to increasing health worker immunizations?

END

(Total Time: 50 minutes)
