

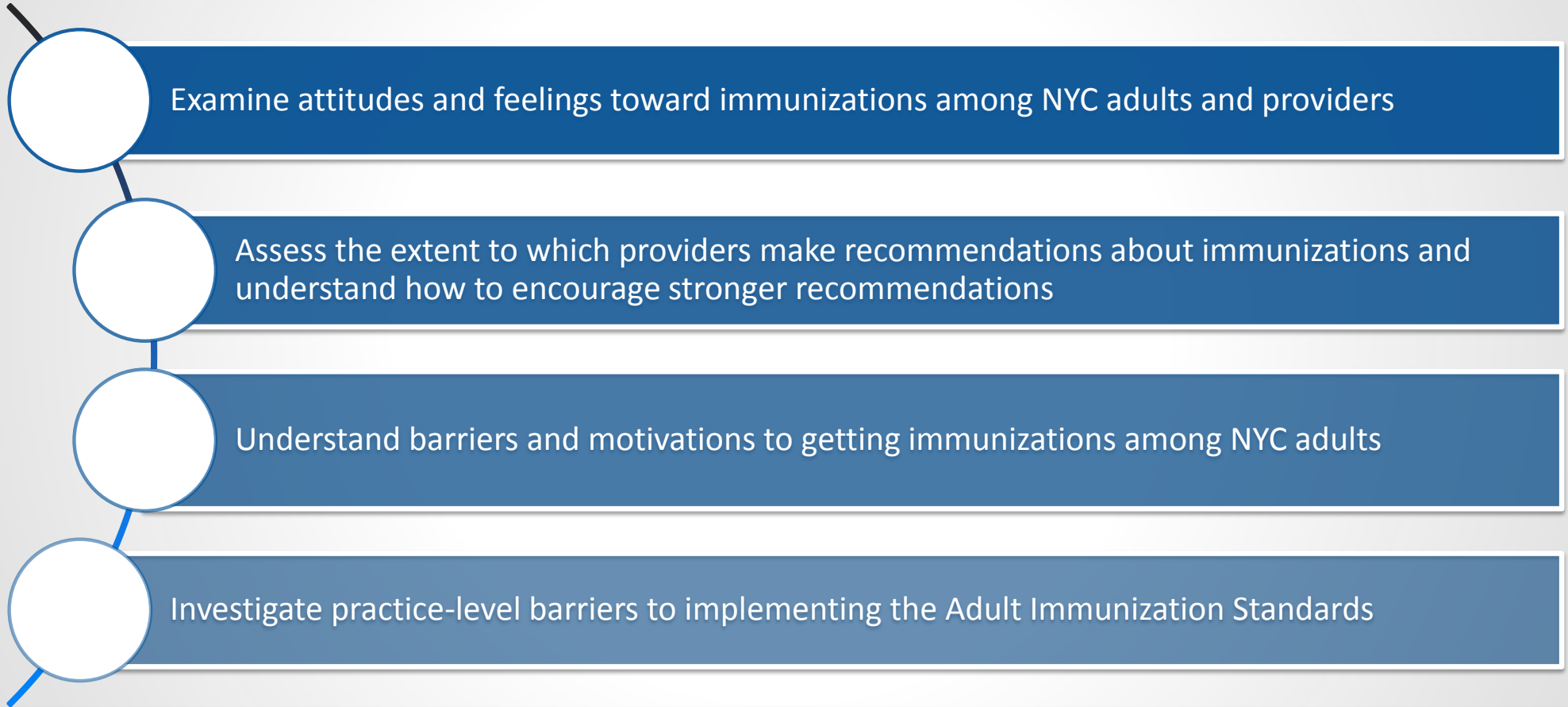
Barriers & Motivators to Immunizations: Exploring the Provider/Patient Journey

New York City Department of Health
& Mental Hygiene



Whitman Insight Strategies | Smarter, sharper, faster WINS.

Research Objectives



Methodology

- Whitman Insight Strategies (WINS) conducted 4 focus groups among NYC patients and 7 groups among providers (physicians & mid-level). Groups took place in February 2016
- Groups lasted approximately 90 minutes each, and were stratified as follows:
 - Patient groups (8 participants per group)
 - General population
 - African American/Caribbean
 - Asians
 - Spanish-speaking Latinos
 - Provider groups (6 participants per group)
 - Primary care physicians (3 groups)
 - Mid-level providers: nurses, PAs, midwives (3 groups)
 - Specialty physicians (cardiologists, oncologists, hematologists, OBGYNs)
- Groups of patients contained a mix of education, HHI (including minimum of 50% under 50K), gender, age, and NYC borough
- Provider groups included a mix of practice type, gender, NYC boroughs, and race/ethnicity



Key Points

- **Context: Patient satisfaction is becoming increasingly important, and influences how providers make recommendations to patients**
- **A successful recommendation includes a conversation—patients want to play an active role in their health care decisions**
- **Immunizations are not top of mind—for patients or for healthcare providers**
- **Providing simple, concise explanations for why a patient needs a vaccine goes a long way**
 - **Articulates the consequences of not getting vaccinated**
 - **Taps into patient values of protection and preventive health**
 - **Provides reassurance about side effects**

The Provider/Patient Relationship



The game has changed, and patient satisfaction is paramount

- Patient satisfaction is becoming increasingly important, especially in a market like NYC where competition is fierce
 - Providers, especially those in private practices, recognize that they are running a business and customer satisfaction is part of maintaining their practice
 - Patients are choosing their providers through third party referrals, including ZocDoc and Yelp
 - *“Patient satisfaction is very important nowadays. If you don’t answer on time, it’s an issue. The patient complains, the patient goes online, and it’ll kill you if they want. And in order to keep the business running, you have to be doing it all.” –PCP*
- The importance of patient satisfaction influences how providers make recommendations to patients—patients want to be a part of their own healthcare decisions and do not want to be “told” what to do



Patients want to play an active role in their health care

- The doctor/patient relationship has changed—while in the past, patients regarded doctors as unquestioned authority figures, now relationships are more reciprocal
 - *“A lot depends on the age of the doctor, older doctors tend to be more likely to say ‘this is what you should do,’ younger doctors think of it more as a partnership.”* –General population patient
 - *“This generation questions everything. The days are gone when people really just said ‘yes doctor’ or ‘yes nurse.’”* –Mid-level provider
- Patients want to play a greater role in the decision-making process related to their health care. They do not blindly follow doctors’ orders and will often ask questions and follow-up with their own research
 - Providers do not automatically earn patients’ trust—trust increases over time once a relationship is formed
 - *“Patients you have a relationship with, that trust you...they are more likely to take your advice.”* –PCP



Provider Recommendations



Conversation must accompany recommendations

- **Patients expect doctors to engage in conversation with them about why they are recommending a certain medication or course of action**
 - Patients are much less likely to trust or follow a recommendation that is given without additional discussion
 - Providers know this and report being careful not to be “too pushy”
 - *“You can’t be too pushy, nobody wants the decision-making process taken out of their hands.”* – Mid-level provider
- **While most providers are willing to engage in discussion and know that it is necessary in order for their recommendations to stick, time can get in the way**
 - *“The moment I step into the door I start seeing patients right away. I take 5 minutes for lunch. I go back to seeing patients. I see about 30 patients a day.”* –PCP
 - **In some practices, this can be offset by mid-level providers**
 - *“More the mid-level provider that’s doing the educating versus the PCP...the PCP doesn’t have time for that, nurses are stronger in that department.”* –Mid-level provider

Most patients will follow-up with their own research

- **Even in trusted relationships, patients will confirm or verify their provider's recommendation**
 - Often this means internet research
- **It is important for providers to direct their patients to reputable sources or provide additional outside information**
 - The CDC and DOH are considered credible
 - *"The DOH are experts. This is what they specialize in. They are connected with the community. They deal with the whole community, so they are more trustworthy."*
–African American patient

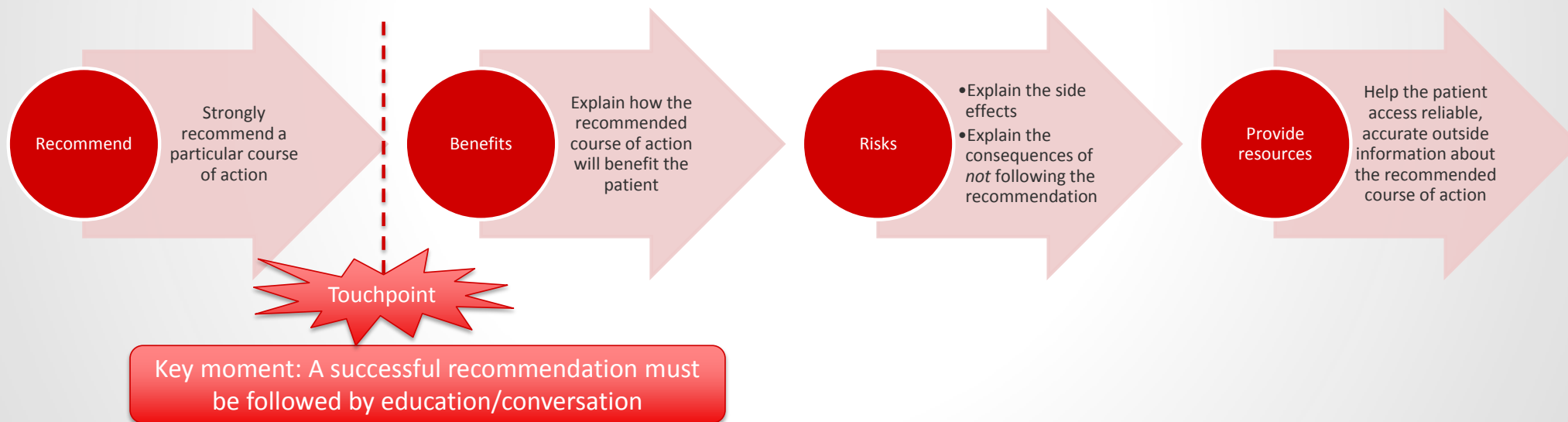


Touchpoint

Following up the recommendation with additional resources is a key moment to help reinforce the recommendation and ensure patients have the opportunity to access reliable information

A successful recommendation is really a conversation and articulates the benefits and risks of the recommended course of action

Elements of a Successful Recommendation



Patients: Barriers & Motivators to Getting Vaccinated



When patients think of personal health, immunizations are not top of mind

- Because immunizations are not high on the priority list, patients will often put them off and tell their provider they will get vaccinated “next time”
 - “The first reaction from the patient is always ‘not today!’ Or ‘Next time!’ They are always trying to procrastinate.” –PCP*



Mind Map: Personal Health



However, preventative health is important to patients, and immunizations are strongly associated with prevention

- Patients also tend to associate vaccinations with children, and see them as more important for children than adults



Mind Map: Vaccinations



Concern about side effects is a barrier to getting vaccinated

- **Patients wary of vaccinations often cite side effects as a reason for their hesitation**
 - Some know people who have had bad reactions to vaccinations
 - *“My doctor asked me if I wanted the vaccine...I told him my brother got a really bad reaction and I didn’t want to get it.”* –African American patient
 - *“Some people get side effects even with the flu shot. I could be the one, so I just get a little worried...you hear it on the news, and my husband’s friend had side effects.”* –Asian patient
 - Some are misinformed about possible side effects
 - *“Will this cause me to get autism is a common question.”* –PCP



Protection—of one's self and family—is a key motivator for getting vaccinated

- **Patients easily connect vaccinations to prevention and protecting one's personal health**
 - *"So many people come into the U.S. with diseases, you have to protect yourself."* –African American patient
 - For some, especially Latinos and Asians, protecting one's family is more important than protection of self
 - *"You should get vaccinated to protect yourself and more importantly this will protect your family as well."* –Asian patient
 - *"If I get sick I can't go to work, do household chores, and take care of my kids...you have to be strong and take care of yourself for your family."* –Latino patient
 - *"I want to be a good sport and say I worry about other people, but in reality I worry about myself first. Even if you worry about taking care of other people, you have to take care of yourself first."* –General population patient



Having accurate, simple information about vaccinations helps motivate patients

- **Many patients are not well-informed about the vaccinations they need and thus are susceptible to misinformation and myths**
 - Educating patients about the benefits of getting vaccinated as well as the consequences of not getting vaccinated is motivating
 - While a doctor's recommendation carries significant weight, having outside educational materials—from the DOH or CDC—will help reinforce the recommendation
 - *“By way of the literature and everything we heard convinced me of the dangers of not getting vaccinated. So many diseases out there.”* –Latino patient
 - *“Some of the information presented is really about education and staying informed. It makes you stop and think this is important, maybe I should re-evaluate.”* –General population patient
 - *“The NYC DOH—it's like putting a stamp on it, it was checked out, it's good, it can be trusted. If they are behind it, it gives more strength.”* –African American patient



3 Reasons to Get Vaccinated (CDC): Tested Among Patients

Key Takeaways

- Patients liked the direct, concise explanations of why they need certain vaccinations, and for many of them this was new information
- Many appreciated the statistics and found the tone to be a good balance between alarming and informative
- Patients said they would read a resource like that in their provider's office
- Protecting one's self from diseases and protecting one's families were the top motivators

"It gives information, it doesn't leave you at maybe, it's short, and they're not trying to sell you the idea of getting vaccinated, it's just the facts." –General population patient

"I think it was very helpful. It's a good thing to have in a doctor's office." –Asian patient

"I've never been offered any other vaccine beside flu. This is new information to me. That catches my attention because I've never heard it before." –Latino patient

INFORMATION SERIES FOR ADULTS

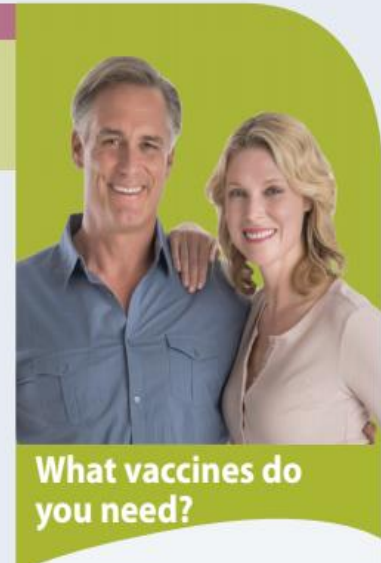
3 Important Reasons For Adults to Get Vaccinated

You may not realize that you need vaccines throughout your adult life. Vaccines are still important to your health and here are just three reasons why.

1. You may be at risk for serious diseases that are still common in the U.S.

Each year thousands of adults in the United States get sick from diseases that could be prevented by vaccines — some people are hospitalized, and some even die.

Even if you got all your vaccines as a child, the protection from some vaccines can wear off over time. You may also be at risk for other diseases due to your age, job, lifestyle, travel, or health conditions.



**What vaccines do
you need?**

Providers: Barriers & Motivators to Vaccinating



Immunizations are given relatively low priority

- **Providers are more concerned with immediate health issues of their patients**
 - Immunizations might be addressed during a physical or other health assessment, but not routinely
 - *“In the scope of the day, if it’s a 74 year old with chest pains, the first priority is not the flu shot.”* –Mid-level provider
 - *“Treating acute illness with medicines is my number one priority...preventing diseases with vaccines is further down on the list.”* -PCP
 - While providers generally agree immunizations are important, sense of urgency is low
 - *“If they come back another day to get it, it’s not like they’re going to die tomorrow without it.”* –Mid-level provider
- **Specialty doctors do not feel it is their place to bring up immunizations and defer to the primary care physician**
 - Specialty doctors feel they are “stepping on the toes” of the PCP by bringing up the topic of immunizations
 - *“Primary care physicians are the ones that see them on a regular basis...[Need the rest of this quote].”* – Specialty provider

Most providers strongly support vaccinations, but a small minority hold personal biases against them

- **On average, providers strongly support immunizations for their patients**
 - They believe that immunizations are critical to preventing diseases
 - *“Immunizations are important to prevent serious disease. Prevention better than treatment.”* –PCP
 - *“Vaccines are important to optimize and protect our patients health. I strongly believe they prevent health issues.”* –Specialty doctor
- **However, a small minority are wary of vaccinations and do not always support them for their patients**
 - Some providers are misinformed
 - *“I think it’s a cost effective way to prevent diseases, but I’m not a 5 because of autism and all those things.”* –Mid-level provider
 - *“Some patients say well what do you think? Do you think I should get vaccinated for the flu? And I say nope...if it's so great, there should be no reason that it isn’t mandated.”* –PCP

Average Support Rating: 4.5

Generally speaking, do you favor or oppose immunizations for your patients? Scale: 0-5



Time is also a barrier to vaccinating patients

- **Not having enough time with patients often precludes discussions about immunizations**
 - Feeling rushed throughout the day is a major pain point for providers, and they cite a lack of time as a reason for not vaccinating patients
 - *“I don’t ever have enough time, I’m always running behind, juggling multiple patients, not just in the office but outside via phone and e-mail.”*—PCP
 - *“The person is either going to bite or not bite, if they bite I get them the vaccine; if they give you a hard time it’s worth explaining more, but that clock is ticking.”* —Mid-level provider
- **Even though mid-level providers are also rushed, their time with a patient is a good opportunity to cover immunization discussions that the physician cannot**
 - *“It’s more the mid-level provider that’s doing the educating versus the PCP...the PCP doesn’t have time for that, and nurses are stronger in that department anyway.”* —Mid-level provider



Cost precludes some providers from pushing vaccinations

- **The cost of vaccinations prevents some providers—especially those in private practices—from strongly recommending them to patients**
 - While the costs of storing vaccinations don't help, issues with insurance coverage is the most common cost pain point for providers
 - *"We don't make money on vaccines, we only break even."*—PCP
 - *"Reimbursement holds me back from supporting vaccinations...I don't know when or if I'll be reimbursed, and they're not \$20 vaccines anymore."* —PCP
- **Because of cost concerns, many providers will stop short of actively recommending vaccines**
 - *"While I do encourage it, I also consider if they can pay for it. If their insurance doesn't cover it, I'd be forcing them to pay for something they don't want and frankly didn't need...are they going to pay that bill?"* —PCP
 - *"I try and let them know there is vaccine A, B, C for these conditions...but then there are these issues that people aren't getting the bill, they can't pay, they're not covered, we're losing money, so you get into a complexity that makes it less of a statement than 'take this vaccine today.' Because then they are stuck with a bill they don't want to pay and there is adversity and it's not worth it."* —PCP



Moving Forward



Helping Providers Implement the Immunization Standards

- By far, the number one thing providers say the DOH can do to help them is educate their patients
 - Providers recognize that outside information cannot replace their own recommendation, but believe having another source reinforce the message would help facilitate conversations with their patients about immunizations
 - They also like the idea of having DOH information handouts in their office
 - *“Educate the citizens, the barrier isn’t the doctor, it’s the patient.”*—PCP
 - *“Advertising is good—they love TV and radio and subway ads, patients will bring them up.”* —Mid-level provider
 - *“The DOH should be out in public, on the news, so patients come to me and say ‘I need this.’”* —Specialty doctor



Motivating Patients

- This research found that patients *can* be motivated to seek out the vaccinations they need
 - Information and education helps tremendously
 - “I didn’t think immunizations were important and I had a fear...now I am a 9 because I know it’s important. Tonight I heard all the risks of getting diseases and also that we can contaminate family members.” –Latino patient
 - “It had me think more...as I get older, I might need to pay more attention to this. It got me thinking.” –African American patients
 - “I changed a little bit because of the statistics regarding New Yorkers, this is what my city’s going through. Something we should have more awareness of.” –General population patient

Shift in Motivation (Scale: 1-10)	
Initial Motivation	Final Motivation
4.3	6.6



Patient Resources

- Patients need and want accurate, simple information about vaccinations. While discussions with providers are essential, most patients will follow-up with their own research. Providing them with information from a trusted source is critical.
 - Providers also say that outside information/resources could help facilitate conversations with their patients about vaccinations



Elements of the Ideal Patient Resource

Simple and concise

Short documents that contain the most vital information is most helpful

Articulates the consequences

Statistics about the consequences of not getting vaccinated (e.g. deaths) help convey urgency

Taps into patient values

Patients believe strongly in **preventive** health and want to **protect** their own health as well as their **family**

Provides reassurance about side effects

Adverse side effects are the number one concern about vaccinations—reassuring patients with information helps

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