

Testimony
Health and Human Services Committee
Thursday, August 5, 2010
North Dakota Department of Health

Good afternoon, Chairman Weisz and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Molly Sander, and I am the Immunization Program manager for the North Dakota Department of Health. I am here today to provide information about the cost to operate a reminder/recall system for immunizations.

The purpose of a reminder/recall process is to communicate to an individual or a responsible party that the individual is due now or on a future date (reminder) or past due (recall) for one or more recommended immunizations. The primary benefit of reminder/recall is to improve the timeliness and completion of immunizations. Studies have shown that reminder/recall process increases immunization rates between 5 and 20 percent. An additional benefit is the ability to improve immunization registry data by using the responses to update demographic and immunization data.

The cost to purchase and implement the forecasting and reminder/recall system into the North Dakota Immunization Information System (NDIIS) was \$72,024. This amount includes two years of maintenance. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds were used for this. Maintenance for forecasting and reminder/recall is \$5,000 per year. Forecasting functionality is complete in the NDIIS. Reminder/recall functionality should be completed within the next month.

Several different entities can initiate the reminder/recall process: a health-care provider for its patients, a local public health unit for individuals in its geographic jurisdiction, or the state health department. The system enables reminder/recall to be conducted by telephone or mailings or a combination of both.

The following is an estimate of the costs for the North Dakota Department of Health to conduct an immunization recall for children ages 19 through 35 months, 6 years and 13 years, and for second doses of influenza vaccine for children ages 8 and younger (25,274 recalls):

- Phone calls only: \$4,549.32 (18 cents per call).
- Postcards only: \$18,197.28 (72 cents per postcard).
- Phone calls and postcards: \$22,746.60 (90 cents for both).

Rather than conduct the recall ourselves, the Department of Health's immunization program could provide postage-paid reminder/recall postcards to providers for their use in conducting reminder/recall. The providers would then only have to print mailing labels from the NDIIS and attach them to the postcards. The cost estimate to provide 75,000 postcards is \$32,250 (43 cents per postcard).

This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.