Golden Achievement Award Submission

Turlock Unified School District: COVID-19 Vaccine Awareness

As a member of the Stanislaus County School Mitigation team I have worked closely throughout the pandemic with the Health Services Agency to share important information related to COVID-19. Last spring, when the COVID-19 vaccine received emergency use authorization, we partnered with SCHSA to share important information to our school audience—first staff and parents then students—as well as host Mobile Vaccine Clinics in our TUSD schools.

Research: With so much misinformation about vaccines, especially on social media, we were very purposeful in sharing information from official sources such as the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the World Health Organization (WHO). Our goals:

- Encourage student and staff attendance at COVID-19 Mobile Vaccine Clinics to provide a familiar and convenient location for those eligible to be vaccinated.
- Utilize CDC, CDPH, and local health department resources to help dispel COVID-19 vaccine myths and misinformation.
- Provide school staff and educational partners with resources that answer questions about the COVID-19 vaccine.

Planning: As Chief Communication Coordinator, my objectives were initially focused on sharing information/countering misinformation, promoting the vaccine, and encouraging attendance at our TUSD Mobile COVID-19 vaccine clinics. Over the course of this campaign, however, the strategy and tactics evolved to be much more factual versus advocacy-based due to negative feedback/pushback received, especially on social media, which anything vaccine-related generated. Our District closely monitored vaccine uptake in our schools and we worked closely with Public Health to plan Mobile Vaccine Clinics at times and locations to support equitable access to the vaccine for our diverse community.

Implementation: One of the unanticipated stumbling blocks in our COVID-19 vaccine campaign was the amount of push-back we received from those in the anti-vaccine camp. While initially our campaign included both advocacy and information in its messaging, akin to the CDPH, over the course of the campaign, we shifted to a much more information-based approach. We also expanded our tactics beyond social media to include articles in our TUSD Weekly Update newsletter written by a respected, recently retired science teacher on various topics related to the COVID-19 vaccine.

Evaluation: From July-December 2021 nearly 2,000 people were vaccinated in our TUSD hosted SCHSA Mobile Vaccine Clinics. We received positive accolades from both our local community and from SCHSA for our efforts: “Since the closure of mass vaccination clinics at Stan State, TUSD has continuously supported COVID-19 vaccination efforts in the community. They hosted many vaccination clinics at their school sites and have supported outreach and promotion of those clinics. Their creative use of social media to educate and encourage vaccination attracted desirable attention and spurred the community to action. As demonstrated by the consistently large vaccine clinics, where turn-outs always exceeded other locations, TUSD’s engagement with the community was successful. A total of 19 COVID-19 mobile vaccine clinics were held throughout TUSD sites where 1,986 vaccines were administered.” ~Julie Falkenstein, MCAH Director, SCHSA

With the CA 7-12 vaccine mandate set to start in July 2022, we will continue to partner with SCHSA to host vaccine clinics and utilize lessons learned from our previous campaign to navigate what will likely be a highly charged effort.
I just want to let you know that your work on spreading the vaccine word is commendable. I am really grateful from the standpoint of a TUSD teacher, and as a community member who is eagerly waiting for a time when coronavirus cannot spread so readily because large numbers of people are vaccinated (or have natural immunity). Not only is the information valued, but I believe that your enthusiasm helps to develop a culture that will lightly wear down the vaccine hesitancy that some harbor. So...THANKS!! You rock!!

Teacher
Pitman High School

Marie Russell
Chief Communication Coordinator
Turlock Unified School District
Turlock High School photography students were tasked with developing graphics for a vaccine campaign. Students utilized imagery similar to that used in WWII including a nod to Rosie the Riveter.

Unfortunately, the use Rosie the Riveter-style graphic generated a lot of negative feedback, especially on social media from those opposed to the vaccine. A decision was made to not use the Uncle Sam-inspired graphic and led to a shift in our campaign strategy to more information vs advocacy-based posts.
Social Media Posts

**PEDIATRIC COVID-19 VACCINATION Q & A**

**How is the vaccine for kids different than the one for adults?**

Like the Pfizer vaccine for adults, the pediatric vaccine is a two-dose series that is given 21 days apart. However, children under the age of 12 receive a dose a third of the adult vaccine. Studies have shown because children typically have an immune system, a smaller dose is similar to an immune response as an adult.

**My child is 11, but will be 12 by the time he gets his second dose. Should he get the pediatric or adult vaccine?**

The CDC recommends that children get the dosage for the age they are when they get vaccinated. Your child would receive the pediatric vaccine for their first dose as an 11-year-old and would receive the adult dose for their second dose after they turn 12.

The CDC recommends getting children vaccinated as soon as possible instead of waiting until they turn 12 to start their vaccination series.

**I'm excited that the vaccine makes my child safer. Are there additional benefits to getting them vaccinated?**

Children have been greatly impacted by the pandemic, in ways that go beyond their individual health.

- Throughout the 2020-21 school year, children have had to be absent or quarantined when they or someone in their household tested positive for COVID-19.
- Students who have or are in close contact with someone who tested positive would not only miss the chance of them contracting COVID-19 but also the chance of missing school if exposed to someone who tests positive.

Children getting vaccinated also protects the people around them, as the holiday season approaches, more people will be gathering with their loved ones, some of whom are at higher risk for severe complications with COVID-19. Even though children may be less likely to get seriously ill from COVID-19, they could spread it to people like family members and others who are more likely to be hospitalized or die if they get COVID-19.

---

**SCHSA CONTENT**

**CDPH CONTENT**

---

**Social Media Posts**

**When does the COVID-19 School Vaccine Mandate take effect?**

Based on current projections for full approval for ages 12+, the mandate will take effect for grades 7-12 starting July 1, 2022.

Currently, there is no estimate for when the mandate will take effect for grades K-6.

**Do any exemptions apply for students for the COVID-19 Vaccine?**

Currently, because the COVID-19 vaccine is not legislatively mandated, exemptions are allowed for both medical reasons and personal beliefs.

Once 12+ receives full FDA approval, the details of the vaccine mandate assessment will be addressed including if exemptions.

---

**What does the COVID-19 School Vaccine Mandate mean for staff?**

By the time the first mandate becomes effective for students, likely July 1, 2022, the verify-on-test requirement for K-12 staff will be converted to a vaccine mandate.

Same exemptions may apply for staff akin to those currently in place for CA Health Care Workers.

---

**What is the current status of FDA authorization and approval of the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Grades 7-12: Students ages 12+ are fully approved. Students ages 12-15 have emergency use authorization. Full approval of ages 12-15 is expected in the next months.

Grades K-6: Students ages 5-11 are expected to receive authorization for full approval.

---

**Will TUSD continue to offer Mobile Vaccine Clinics?**

Yes. We will continue to host COVID-19 Mobile Vaccine Clinics in TUSD as well as upcoming SCHSA flu/nasal vaccine clinics.

---

**SCHSA CONTENT**

**CDPH CONTENT**
TRANSITION TO 12 AND OLDER VACCINES

Social Media Posts

AFTER COVID-19 VACCINATION

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

At the shot site:
• Redness
• Swelling
• Pain

Throughout the body:
• Tiredness
• Headache
• Chills
• Fever

HELPFUL TIPS TO REDUCE SIDE EFFECTS

To reduce pain at shot site:
• Use or exercise the arm

To reduce fever:
• Drink lots of water
• Dress lightly
• Take over-the-counter medications like Tylenol

WHEN TO CALL A DOCTOR

Mild side effects from the vaccine are common. It means the vaccine is working. Side effects are more common for the second dose of the vaccine. A few people have worse side effects than others. Contact a doctor if:
• Redness or tenderness at the shot site get worse after 24 hours
• Side effects do not go away after a few days

If you do not have a doctor:
Call: (669) 744-1300

PEDICATRIC COVID-19 VACCINES

Two shot series:
• The second shot is three weeks after the first shot.
• Only Pfizer has emergency use authorization for ages 5-11 at this time.
• The dose is smaller than the Pfizer vaccine for adults. It is one-third of an adult dose.
• Your child will get a white CDC COVID-19 vaccine record card. You can also bring your child’s yellow childhood immunization card if you have one.

COVID-19 MOBILE VACCINE CLINIC TURLOCK

PITMAN HIGH SCHOOL
2525 N. Christofferson Pkwy. Turlock, CA 95382
Tuesday, December 14
Comvax (Pfizer 5+), Moderna and J&J (18+)
Vaccines & boosters:
3:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Children under 18 years of age will require an adult present:
• Parent/Guardian OR
• Designated Adult with Consent Form

Visit the COVID-19 Information Center for vaccine resources.

turlockusd
Pitman High School

turlockusd SAVE THE DATE
SCHSA Mobile Vaccine Clinic
Tuesday, December 14
3-6 PM
Pitman High School Cafeteria
Children Under 18 Require an Adult Be Present
Pfizer, Moderna, J & J TUSD

Our final SCHSA Mobile Vaccine Clinic for 2021-2022 will be held at Pitman High School on Tuesday, December 14. Since our first clinics this summer, nearly 2,000 people have been vaccinated at the clinics we hosted in TUSD. Last week, at our Turlock High School clinic, SCHSA ran out of Pfizer for children so those vaccinating 12 and under should plan to arrive early!

View insights

Liked by turlockchamber and 23 others
5 DAYS AGO

Add a comment...
The 411 on the COVID-19 Vaccine

Eric Julien, Retired TUSD Science Teacher

With the arrival of the COVID-19 vaccine in Pima County, and the “Education/Childcare” part of the Phase 1b distribution plan coming soon, we thought this would be a good time to address some frequently asked questions.

We enlisted the help of retired Tucson High School science teacher Eric Julien, who helped break the science down in a way that everyone can understand.

What is the difference between the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines? The Pfizer vaccine has 50 millionths of a gram of mRNA and Moderna has 100 millionths of a gram of vaccine. Pfizer’s vaccine has to be stored in a super cold freezer because it is less than one third the amount of active ingredient in Moderna’s vaccine so any of it that breaks down significantly reduces the dose.

What’s being injected into you anyway? As a former science teacher, this brand new type of vaccine is exciting. In the past, vaccines were made from crippled viruses. It was like you shot the virus in both legs and then injected them allowing you to get a little sick but most people survived and developed immunity. Vaccines have improved in that we can inject the outside of the virus into you or do very significant damage to the DNA (genetic instructions) so you generally don’t get sick from the virus and build immunity.

Corona Virus (“crown” virus) is so named because of the protein “spikes” that project from it. If you are infected with a virus, your immune system recognizes the outside coat of the virus and not the DNA or RNA (both are found inside the protein coat). It then, randomly, makes combinations of antibodies that will attach and immobilizes the invading virus until it finds one that sticks to the virus. This can happen quickly or take some time as it is a random process.

What’s the science behind these vaccines? Emmanuella Charpentier won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2020. She discovered a process to assemble DNA or RNA in any order you want. Using the process she developed, called CRISPR, scientists at Moderna and Pfizer were able to mass-produce mRNA (messenger RNA) that are the instructions for making the “spikes” of protein found on the Coronavirus. When your body finds a foreign protein in your body, it produces an immune response (makes antibodies) that stick multiple copies of the virus together and sends out cells that digest the cluster of invading cells, preventing you from getting your cells invaded.

These new vaccines put the instructions (mRNA) and not the virus into your body. Your cells make the spike proteins, your immune system sees, “stranger danger” and makes antibodies. The antibody making process takes some time so your immune system is “primed” for a real invasion of COVID. A “booster” shot 3-4 weeks later causes your immune system to totally ramp up the production of antibodies so you are prepared to defend against the real COVID virus.

Will I be immune immediately? No, it takes a few days to a week or so to build your defenses to an invader, so keep wearing your mask, distance, and wash your hands.

The Speed of Science

Eric Julien, Retired Turlock High School Science Department Chair

In the 1860s, Johann Friedrich Miescher discovered a substance in the white blood cells that turned out to be DNA. He didn’t know what it did. He just figured out how to separate the molecules that make up the cell.

Almost 90 years later, in 1953, James Watson and Francis Crick discovered the structure of DNA. They didn’t know how it copied itself nor how it controlled our cells.

By the 1970s we knew how DNA copied itself and discovered how it made proteins which make up our bodies but didn’t know the sequence of the bases that made up DNA. At that time knowledge was doubling every decade. It was estimated that it would take more than a lifetime to figure out each gene in our DNA.

At the end of the century, we had computer-aided robots that were able to determine the sequence of the bases in DNA in weeks and now we are down to hours.

Scientists eagerly studied DNA, knowing its sequence, knowledge of how it controls life processes allows us to make medicines and vaccines that target specific proteins. The process has become so exact that we can replace one base in a gene with another base so that the victim of Sickle Cell Anemia is no longer sick and will live a normal life, without all the pain and early death the disease causes.

DNA is exciting but some scientists looked at ancient strains of bacteria that lived in hostile environments (like the near-boiling temperatures of geysers) and realized that the circular strand of DNA they possessed contained instructions of virus DNA. Why? They realized that this was an immune system. When a virus invades a bacteria, the bacteria has a type of RNA that cuts up the viral DNA and adds it to their DNA chain giving the bacteria protection from any further viral invasion. Jennifer Doudna realized that we could use the special types of RNA to edit any DNA and to build unique strands of DNA and RNA. Emmanuella Charpentier came to the same realization at the same time. She used this new discovery to make a RNA vaccine for Pfizer and her company BioNTech.

Merck Pharmaceutical has recently announced a successful animal medicine. If the special RNA in bacteria can cut out vital DNA, why can’t we ingest them and have it cut up the COVID-19? These RNA tools are highly specific to the virus they cut on the genetic strand so they aren’t chopping up your DNA. The path to the partial cure of COVID ran through Turlock, Lauren Weisel graduated from Turlock High School. She earned her degree in Chemistry at the University of California, Irvine. She moved to the East Coast and took a job with Merck where she was put on the team to develop molnupiravir. Infected people with symptoms that tend to lead to hospitalization and death now have their chance at going to the hospital cut in half.

Past vaccines took years to develop. That doesn’t mean they were tested for years. The same standards that were used to certify past vaccines were applied to the newly developed vaccines. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines aren’t made of deformed virus DNA nor are they made from viruses grown in egg albumin (egg whites) which cause adverse effects when injected into people with egg allergies.

Jonas Salk developed a vaccine for Polio. He was able to bring his vaccine to market much quicker than any other vaccine because he used the internal cells of Hamster Cells (RNA cells), instead of eggs. He tested if on living subjects over a long period of time, he tested it on human cells and introduced the polio virus to the cells. He stopped a crippling, deadly disease. The SARS-CoV-2 (human papilloma virus) vaccine development was accelerated by the use of HeLa cells. Scientific advances have advanced technology which now thankfully allow us to accelerate the production of vaccines.