

AMEF and AMCNO Sponsor Immunize Ohio Event

Through the generous support of the Academy of Medicine Education Foundation (AMEF) and others, Immunize Ohio hosted a one-day, CME-credited immunization symposium on Sept. 10 at the Embassy Suites in Dublin, Ohio.

The goal of the 2015 Statewide Immunization Conference was to provide a global perspective utilizing science-based strategies to effectively meet emerging challenges. Best practices were presented to facilitate timely, age-appropriate immunizations. The conference, "Global Exposure – Local Effect," drew participants from around the state and focused on new adult vaccination standards, global infectious disease threats and the status of possible vaccines; the true cost to Ohio for not vaccinating; adolescent vaccines, environmental survey results on HPV vaccination with hopeful strategies; and a keynote address outlining when religious beliefs can undermine modern medicine.



Cindy Modie delivers the opening remarks at the Immunize Ohio session.

Opening remarks were provided by the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and presentations were provided by representatives from PFIZER Vaccine, Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Ohio State University (OSU) and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

The first presenter was John McLaughlin, PhD, MSPH, from PFIZER Vaccine. Dr. McLaughlin discussed the cost of not vaccinating, pointing to the results of a recent report which estimated the economic impact to Ohio of the four major adult vaccine-preventable diseases (influenza, pneumococcal, herpes zoster and pertussis) was considerable and that broadening adult immunizations efforts beyond influenza may help reduce the



Dr. Heidi Gullett discusses how to increase HPV vaccinations.

economic burden of disease. He also noted that there is a need to address the barriers of adult vaccination at the patient and provider level and discussed the need to establish a public health rationale for improving awareness of adult vaccine-preventable disease in Ohio.

James Kazura, MD, from CWRU, discussed the evolution and emergence of human infectious disease, citing global infectious disease threats and discussing the potential vaccine solutions to emerging diseases. Following Dr. Kazura was Carolyn Bridges, MD, from the CDC, who described for the audience the barriers to increase adult vaccinations as well as the barriers for patients and providers to fully immunize adults. She further outlined the burden of vaccine-preventable disease and illness, a list of recommended adult vaccines and current adult vaccination rates. Her presentation also covered an update on Tdap and influenza vaccination of pregnant women, a review of "Practice Standards for Adult

Immunization" and resources for both physicians and patients to assist in implementing these standards. Just before the afternoon break, Alexandra Thornton, MPH, representing the ODH, provided an overview of the Assessment, Feedback, Incentive, eXchange (AFIX) Awards and congratulated this year's recipients.

Heidi Gullett, MD, MPH, from CWRU, and Toyin Sokari, MPH, from OSU, began the afternoon session discussing how to increase HPV vaccinations. They provided information on a national environmental scan to understand the issues impacting rates of HPV vaccine uptake and reviewed findings from HPV environmental scans conducted across Ohio and within Cuyahoga County. Both presenters also discussed multi-level strategies for increasing HPV vaccine uptake across Ohio in various settings, noting that every year we delay increasing vaccination rates, more women are at risk of developing cervical cancer.

The final presenter was Paul Offit, MD, from Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Dr. Offit provided attendees with a copy of his new book, *Bad Faith – When Religious Belief Undermines Modern Medicine*, and discussed the challenges resulting from the anti-vaccine movement while describing strategies to increase vaccination rates.

The AMEF and the AMCNO were pleased to be sponsors of this important program. ■



A capacity crowd was on hand to learn more about immunization issues.