

Applying a Systems Lens to Promote Immunization in Newcomers to Canada: A Spotlight on the PHAC Kiosk Pilot Project at YVR Airport

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System Problem

Addressing the concerning resurgence of serious vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles, is a top priority for the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the Ministry of Health (BC) and Immunize BC team, and local health authorities and non-government agencies.

Although the majority of Canadians perceive vaccines as safe, effective, and important, vaccine hesitancy and misinformation still prevail as a top threat to public health.

BC's immunization system is unique from other Canadian provinces.

- Many vaccines have coverage rates well below provincial and federal target values
- BC has more vaccine-hesitant and vaccine-refusing individuals than all other provinces, excluding Quebec.
- The province has some of the most innovative and expansive immunization promotion programming in the country.

Many policy initiatives in BC were catalyzed from the 2019 measles outbreak in the lower mainland. As of July 31, there have been 31 measles cases in the province.

PHAC's BC Immunization Working Group

PHAC's regional offices bring regional context of public health issues to the Agency. This is accomplished through strategic intelligence, knowledge sharing, understanding the needs of jurisdictions, investing in relationships, and helping partners prepare for events. In BC, there is a regional office in downtown Vancouver.

PHAC regional offices...

- Manage Agency presence in jurisdictions
- Enable jurisdictional public health capacity
- Support Agency programs &
- Enhance emergency preparedness and response infrastructure

PHAC's BC-based Western Regional Operations formed a cross-unit immunization working group to support Agency goals and respond to the regional priority of immunization.

Working group objectives include:

1. **Intelligence:** Provide timely regional intelligence to the Agency on regional strengths and opportunities in immunization
2. **Engagement:** Support PHAC's Immunization Partnership Fund (IPF) in regional engagement on promotion and partnership opportunities
3. **Promotion:** Facilitate enhanced dissemination of Agency knowledge products

Kiosk Project Rationale

- The index measles case for the 2019 BC outbreak related to international travel, and Canadian ports of entry (POE) see several undetected measles cases annually.
- In 2018, BC had the 3rd highest rate of refugee claims in the country after Quebec and Ontario (respectively).
- There is little information on the immunization status of newcomers to BC, justifying a promotion project to prevent health inequities.

Kiosk Project Goals

1. To enhance awareness of the priority of immunizations.
2. To connect newcomers with their local public health services in province of relocation.
3. To disseminate national and provincial immunization promotion materials.

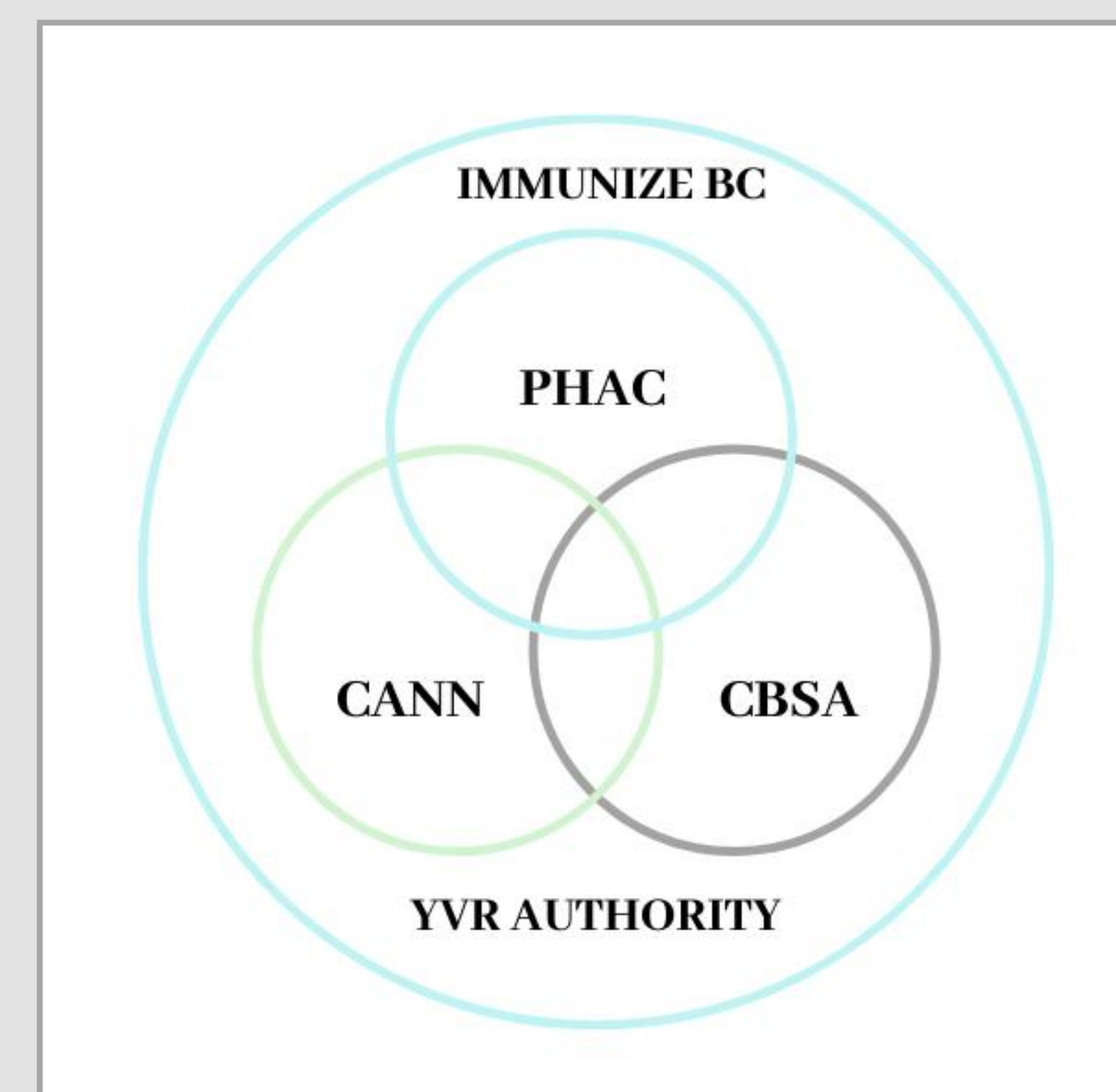
Project Pre-Implementation & Stakeholder Collaboration

Timeline: September 2019 – December 2019

Implementation steps:

1. Obtain language data from CBSA to determine top languages of newcomers through YVR.
2. Connect with stakeholders for project support and approvals.
3. Research and obtain immunization resources in multiple languages, and local public health information

Variables: Country of origin, language used, number of children, age of youngest child, family immunization status, immunization records, relocation province, and immigration status.



Project stakeholders (inner Venn) and influencing forces

What is the Kiosk Project?

- Newcomers (refugees, students, workers, and landing immigrants) come through CBSA's Voluntary Compliance for visas, work permits, and residency status.
- After processing by the CBSA, newcomers are free to leave the area – but pass PHAC public and travel health officers (i.e.: public health nurses) at the Exit.
- Nurses engage with newcomers by creating a dialogue around immunization, and sharing promotion materials in the newcomers preferred language.
- Nurses also share local public health information for the region in which they will be residing.
- All interactions are voluntary and are not a condition of immigrating.

Preliminary Findings

The pilot project is still ongoing until December, however there are some emerging findings:

Response

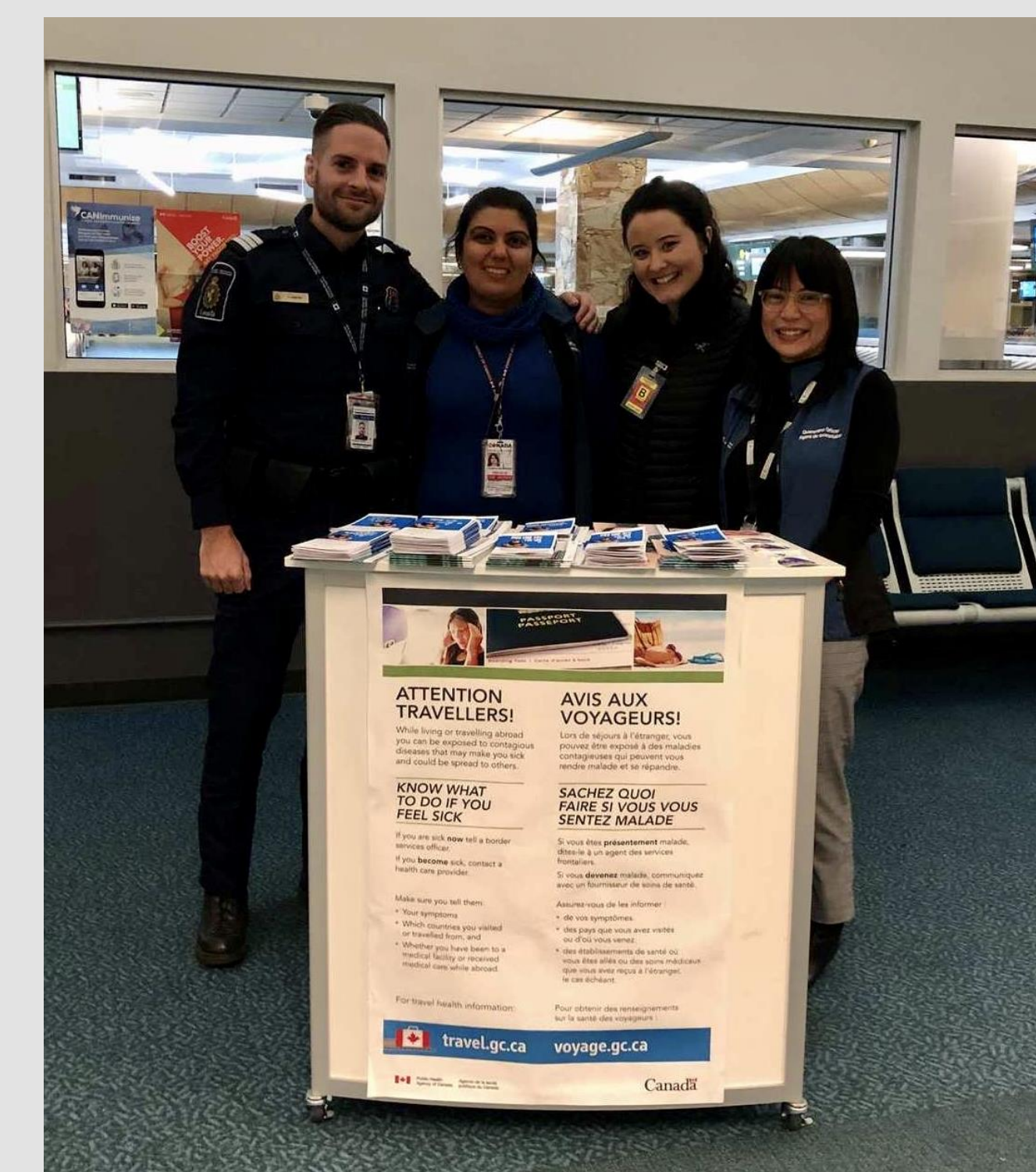
- Project well received by stakeholders and newcomers
- Local public health partners have noted the project impact

Immunization Records

- Families with children are more likely to have health records
- Origin of newcomers may also predict their likelihood of having immunization records

Limitations of Promotional Materials

- Some materials for newcomers are targeted towards children/ parents and are ignored by adult non-parents.
- Not all languages are represented, such as Japanese
- Many useful materials for adult immigrants are only available in English or French.



CBSA Operations Chief with PHAC staff at project kiosk

Regional PHAC Activities

The working group aims to engage a variety of stakeholders across government and non-government sectors.

Besides the YVR Kiosk Project, other activities of the working group include:

- Supporting the expansion and promotion of Kids Boost Immunity (KBI) and other regionally-funded IPF projects
- Promoting Agency immunization products and engaging with government and non-government stakeholders in BC
- Analyzing outbreaks and regional events, and sharing intelligence with the Agency (ex: an analysis of the 2019 measles outbreak)
- Analyzing the provincial immunization system (immunization rates; protective factors and risk factors for uptake and acceptance; regional knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs (KAB) for immunizations; regional policy and program changes; and stakeholders)
- Creating regional intelligence summaries for other Agency units such as the Centre for Immunization and Respiratory Infectious Diseases (CIRID) and the Chief Public Health Officer (CPHO).
- Supporting and promoting Agency strategies related to immunization (ex: CPHO vaccine hesitancy strategy)



National and regional materials available at the Kiosk

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