

The Nuesoft Xpress[™] Immunization Compliance Manager Helps Dordt College Health Center Staff Stay Ahead of Mumps Outbreak

Quick Facts:

Health Center Staff:

Director Pam Hulstein, ARNP, RN;
Linda Ver Steeg, RN; and
Linda Vogel, receptionist

Background:

Private, four-year college located in
Sioux Center, Iowa

Students:

1,346

System Applications:

Appointment Scheduler
Reporting and iAnalysis
Upload Module
Immunization Compliance Manager

System Configuration:

DSL Connection
Three workstations

DORDT
COLLEGE

Background/Reason for Search

In early 2004, Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, faced challenges similar to many schools of its size. With no budget for a full-scale health center, the college, which enrolls 1,300 students, outsourced health services to a local medical clinic. The school's student services department maintained the immunization program, which was administered manually. To track immunizations, student services staff members required students at registration to hand-write their immunization status on 3 x 5 index cards, and present them to the registrar's office. As long as a student submitted a card, he or she was considered to be compliant with required immunizations.

In August 2004, the college added a health center department, and brought on Pam Hulstein, ARNP, RN, as the director. In addition to running a full-service clinic, Hulstein and her team would also be taking over Dordt's immunization program. With just three staff members, Hulstein realized that they would need a practice management solution to help maximize resources and streamline health center operations, as well as to effectively track immunization compliance.

With input from Dordt's computer services department, Hulstein decided on Nuesoft Xpress[™], an Internet-based, full-service practice management software solution. In addition to its many features, the product's ability to track immunization compliance won Hulstein over.

Ready for the 2006 Mumps Outbreak

Nuesoft Xpress' immunization compliance tracking feature was put to the test in Spring 2006, when Hulstein and her team began to get word of a mumps outbreak in Iowa and seven other Midwestern states. By April 2006, public health officials reported more than 1,000 cases nationally, the majority of which were in Iowa. The Iowa Department of Health reported more cases in two months than in the entire previous 10 years combined.

Hulstein did not waste any time. Using the Nuesoft Xpress system she was able to generate a report to let her know which of Dordt's 1,300 students had not received the Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR) vaccine, or were due for one. The report, generated instantaneously, uncovered 80 students who were not compliant. Registrations of these students were held until they came into the health services department for their vaccines.

"Nuesoft Xpress was a huge time saver for us," Hulstein said. "Before, the student affairs department, in conjunction with local health authorities, would have had to go through 1,300 index cards, check every person's immunization status, write down the names of those students who were not compliant, generate a list, and then track down the students that required the immunizations. It would have been a very labor intensive process."

Instead, Hulstein was able to immediately contact the 80 students who required the immunizations via the campus e-mail system and the campus mail system. Also, health center staff directly targeted each non-compliant student with an educational packet about mumps to increase awareness of symptoms and cut down on potential spread of the disease.

Deb Vander Plas with Community Health Partners in Sioux County, Iowa, worked with Dordt College during a suspected active tuberculosis case on campus in the early 1990s, and notes the difference that Nuesoft Xpress made in helping Dordt officials manage a potential public health crisis.

“The fact that we were able to get the list of non-compliant students immediately this time around made a huge difference,” said Vander Plas. “This is critical in an outbreak, when there are many different population groups who might be exposed and it is our job to allocate doses. Knowing the exact number of students who are at risk allows public health officials to reserve the number of doses necessary to meet the needs of the college health population.”

Containing the Outbreak

Within one week, 50 percent of the students identified as not being compliant with the MMR vaccine reported in to the health services department.

According to Vander Plas, “A 50 percent participation rate is very, very good, especially at the college level because there are no parents around to make sure that their kids get to the health center for the vaccines, and because (students) are typically part of a population that does not believe that they will be impacted by an outbreak.”

Moreover, thanks to the timely report generated by Nuesoft Xpress, Community Health Partners administered the vaccines quickly, which helped to further reduce the risk of a campus outbreak.

“Within two days of receiving the vaccine from the Iowa Department of Public Health, we had immunized Dordt’s at-risk students, which is remarkable,” said Vander Plas.

Results At-a-Glance

With Nuesoft Xpress, Dordt College health services staff:

- Reduced the amount of time required to track immunizations from more than 20 hours to less than five minutes
- Reduced the number of full-time employees involved in immunization compliance reporting by one half.
- Used a more proactive approach to keeping students healthy (non-compliant students could be targeted with educational information and were not permitted to register without current vaccination records)
- Secured a 50 percent participation rate from students identified as being at risk
- Eliminated any cases of the mumps from occurring on campus (no cases, no quarantines, no lost class time, etc.)

About Nuesoft Xpress

Nuesoft Xpress is the leading Internet-based medical management solution for student health centers. Using innovative technology, Xpress offers quick, secure access to health center operations from anywhere, at any time; as well as an automated connection to a school-wide student information system for automatic transfer of student demographics and financial information. Core functionality includes interactive scheduling, encounter management, immunization tracking, electronic medical records and comprehensive reporting and analysis.

About Nuesoft Technologies

Nuesoft Technologies Inc. provides practice management solutions for physicians’ offices, billing companies, and student health centers. Established in 1993 at the Georgia Institute of Technology’s acclaimed Advanced Technology Development Center (ATDC), the company became an immediate success by developing the first platform independent medical software program to the medical community. Currently, Nuesoft has an established U.S. customer base, with more than 3,000 medical providers covering 46 specialties across 47 states, as well as an international presence. Nuesoft also serves as an independent clearing house, and processes 2 million claims transactions per year. For more information, visit www.nuesoft.com, or call 800.401.7422.

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