



November 5, 2024

Dear EXCITE partners,

As the Director of the Immunization Services Division (ISD) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), I want to express my thanks for our partnership with the Extension Foundation and congratulate you on the [Extension Collaborative on Immunization Teaching and Engagement \(EXCITE\) project's](#) achievements over the past three years.

The EXCITE project has reached over **20 million individuals** through more than **179,000 adult immunization engagements** and conducted over **1,100 vaccine clinics** with local partners in unique settings, resulting in nearly **50,000 vaccinations**. This incredible impact demonstrates the project's success.

Early in the rollout of COVID-19 vaccine, CDC awarded funds to the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to reach rural and other medically underserved populations through the Extension Foundation. The Extension Foundation's EXCITE project leverages the talents of Extension professionals who are trusted messengers in every county across the nation. Extension professionals are uniquely situated at local levels to engage with their communities and build partnerships to improve community health. Through the EXCITE project, these trusted messengers deliver immunization messages through their health curriculum, creating a sustainable model to improve vaccine confidence.

This past year, the EXCITE project added COVID-19 vaccine information into [NIFA's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program \(EFNEP\)](#) to reach low-income families. This information included how uninsured or underinsured people could receive a free COVID-19 vaccine through CDC's Bridge Access Program. This integration of immunization education into an established nutrition education program demonstrates how vaccination can fit in a whole health educational campaign. In the next phase of funding, the EXCITE project seeks to further its reach by adding adult immunization education to other programs, including Dining with Diabetes, Community Leadership Development, Master Gardeners, and Teen Leaders.

As the immunization landscape evolves, the EXCITE project can leverage established programs, adapt quickly, and respond to vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks. EXCITE's plan to engage farm owners in the H5N1 avian influenza outbreak reflects this response capability.

I know how hard field agents work and how much you all care about the community members you serve. Your work to encourage vaccination through the EXCITE program saves lives. Thank you for your partnership.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Georgina Peacock".

Georgina Peacock, MD, MPH, FAAP
Director, Immunization Services Division
National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases
Centers for Control and Prevention