



# Texas Department of State Health Services

2005 Immunization Branch Response  
to Hurricanes

Jack Sims, Branch Manager

# Branch Organizational Structure



- Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Team
- School Compliance Monitoring Team
- Public Information, Education, and Training Group
- ImmTrac Group
- Vaccine Services Group



# Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Team

- Contract management and monitoring
- Technical assistance to DSHS health service regions and local health departments
- Nurse consulting services
- Assist in budget decisions



# School and Childcare Facility Technical Assistance Team

- Prepare rules
- Technical assistance to schools and school nurses
- Technical assistance to childcare facility operators
- Oversees the collection and analysis of compliance reports
- Process exemption forms



# Public Information, Education, and Training Group

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- Print and distribute educational materials including Vaccine Information Statements
- Media campaigns
- Toll-free hotline
- Newsletters

The logo consists of three overlapping squares: a yellow one on top, a red one on the bottom left, and a blue one on the bottom right. A thin black horizontal line passes through the center of the squares.

# ImmTrac Group

- Manage and operate a web-based application to store immunization histories
- Educate users and potential users of the system
- Recruit authorized users to report and utilize data in the system
- Process new user requests
- Toll-free customer support help-desk



# Vaccine Services Group

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- Manage the Texas Vaccines for Children Program
- Recruit and educate enrolled providers
- Quality assurance
- Process vaccine orders and manage a vaccine distribution contract




# Branch Response to Katrina


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- Governor's order to relax rules
- Communication with the incident command for the department
- Immunization recommendations for workers going to the effected areas
- Assessed vaccine inventory and need
- Began holding daily conference calls with regional DSHS immunization staff

# Branch Response to Katrina (cont.)



- Shelters with evacuees
- Immunization recommendations for evacuees and for individuals in shelters
- Houston, Harris county, and San Antonio vaccine needs
- Vaccine depots
- Developed streamlined process to receive state-supplied vaccine



# Branch Response to Katrina (cont.)

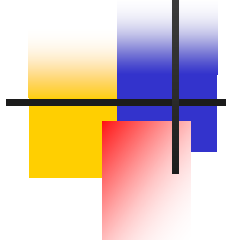
- Adjusted TVFC provider reporting forms to track hurricane doses
- Adjusted the TWICES encounter system to track hurricane doses
- Call center
- Access to the Louisiana registry, LINKS
- November 30<sup>th</sup>—ended the relaxation of immunization requirements



# Access to LINKS

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- DSHS Facilitated access to LINKS for:
  - 6 users at DSHS-Immunization Branch
  - 31 users at 8 HSRs
  - 80 users at 23 LHDs statewide



## Results from LINKS access

- 187,870 doses of vaccine were verified through the LINKS registry
- \$2.9 million in savings by preventing revaccination
- 26,143 successful client searches



# The job is not done yet!

- Access to LINKS continues with several inquiries per day...reported by both staff in Austin and staff at the HSRs
- Louisiana has officially requested records (confidentiality issues are a barrier)



# Then, along came Rita...

- Vaccine storage and handling guidelines for emergency events
- Vaccine depots and providers had extra vaccine on hand to care for Katrina evacuees
- Evacuation of facilities
- Evacuation of vaccine



# Questions?

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