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## Peer-to-Peer Model to Educate and Spread Awareness of Vaccines in Detroit

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**TITLE:** Peer-to-Peer Model to Educate and Spread Awareness of Vaccines in Detroit

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**ABSTRACT:**

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, national vaccination rates show a dangerous decline with Detroit being amongst the lowest with only 41.3% of adolescents completing the vaccine series. The Vaccine Ambassador program was created to mitigate the decline in vaccination rates through the education and empowerment of youth via train-the-trainer model of education.

The program was implemented over the course of two years with a total of 28 high school students who received education on the history and mechanism of vaccines, herd immunity, and how to effectively communicate. The program was created in collaboration with physicians in Infectious Diseases and a professor of communication at Wayne State University.

Ambassadors aimed to spread this knowledge to youth in Detroit communities through outreach events. The impact of the program was measured through a two-pronged approach—through a pre- and post-survey given to the Vaccine Ambassadors and through a pre- and post-test given to the youth at the events. The survey for the Ambassadors included thirty-one items that measured their knowledge about vaccines and immunity. The test for the youth at the outreach events included seven items that tested knowledge about vaccines.

Based on both pre-test responses, it is apparent that Detroit's youth lack knowledge regarding vaccines. The Vaccine Ambassador program increased the ambassador's depth of knowledge and reaffirmed their positive attitudes about vaccines. Youth can apply their knowledge and teach others, and by doing so, can make informed decisions when older and enact behavioral changes that promote healthier living.