What’s it like at the Epicenter of the Measles Outbreak?

Chanie Sternberg
President/CEO
Refuah Health Center

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Commissioner's Grand Rounds
Disclosures

No conflicts of interest to declare
Were We Surprised?

Yes and no.
Anti-Vax Movement: Insidious Influence

“They identified themselves as experts, but in fact, were highly misinformed and gave a great deal of false information. It is really unfortunate that they have the ear of the community.”

Debra Blog, MD, MPH
Director Division of Epidemiology
NYSDOH
Fluid Travel to Sister Communities in NY and Abroad

"New Square might be small, but it is an international city and must be viewed as such."

Robert McDonald, MD, MPH
CDC Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer at NYSDOH
Large Families: Many Infants

“Even in relatively highly vaccinated communities, if you have a lot of little children under the age of one … you’re going to have an awful lot of young children at high risk for contagion.”

Aaron E. Glatt, MD, FACP, FIDSA, FSHEA
Chairman, Dept. of Medicine
Chief, Infectious Diseases and Hospital Epidemiologist
South Nassau Communities Hospital

Refuah patient age distribution in 2018:
• 2,905 (4%) patients age < 12 months
• 10,432 (15%) patients aged < 4 years
• Prior to epidemic, first MMR recommended at 12-15 months and not again until after age 4
Tight Knit Community

• Social structure built on congregating; To pray, to study, to eat, to celebrate....

• The New Square Synagogue hosts 3,500 residents during weekly prayer.

• During holidays, attendance increases to approximately 7,000.
Propelled to Take Quick Decisive Action

Refuah Health Center:

• 70th largest FQHC in US (out of nearly 1,400)
• 125 providers across 30 specialties and multiple sites
• Serving 68,000 patients annually
• #1 performer in NYS DSRIP (Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment) Program
Leveraged Relationships

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- NYS and Rockland County Departments of Health (DOH)
- Israeli Ministry of Health
- Academic Institutions
- Religious Community Leaders
Leveraged Trust

Organization

Patient

Provider
Fight Fear With Trust, Not With Facts or Menace
Thank You