

CASE STUDY

Protecting Vaccines For Rural Communities

Riverside San Bernardino
County Indian Health, Inc.

California-Based Indian Health Service Automates their Vaccine Management System to Improve Care and Protect Vaccines

AccuVax® Vaccine Management System Gives Rural Health Leaders Peace of Mind

The Trials & Tribulations of Tribal Health

When Ramon (Ray) Ferra, M.D., started as the Clinical Services Director for the Riverside San Bernardino County Indian Health, Inc. earlier this year he knew that providing timely vaccinations to local American Indians was critically important to support both individual and tribal health.



“It’s a very high-risk population with a heavy burden of chronic illnesses, and that’s across the board from infants to older adults, so vaccines that protect against other diseases are a high requirement,” said Dr. Ferra. “In overseeing the medical care at each of our seven clinics, I quickly started dealing with immunizations—and the trials and tribulations of storing and managing vaccines.”

For starters, vaccines must be handled carefully and kept within a strict temperature range. If they’re not, vaccines can lose potency and no longer be suitable for administration. He soon began researching options and came across the AccuVax Vaccine Management System.

The Resource Challenges of Status Quo

Before having the AccuVax units in place, Dr. Ferra and his team of 14 providers relied on pharmacy-grade refrigerators and freezers. Each was equipped with redundant thermometers that would read and report the temperatures every hour or so. His clinical team also dedicated considerable time to keeping real-time logs, diligently recording the highest and lowest temperatures every morning and afternoon and be at the ready for any emergency response to possible risk to vaccine integrity.

The Realities of Rural Tribal Locations

Because several of the Indian Health clinics are located in smaller desert communities, there can be extreme fluctuations in environmental temperatures and frequent power outages.

“When there was a storm or a super-hot day, these clinics would lose power and the temperatures would quickly climb in our refrigerator or freezer,” Dr. Ferra explains. “We’d have to scramble, literally, to identify employees in one of our larger clinics who could drop what they were doing and drive to the smaller clinic to retrieve the vaccines – it required training on where and how to package them so that they could be safely transported.”



Protecting Our People

Riverside San Bernardino County Indian Health, Inc., which serves 9 tribal communities across two counties outside of Los Angeles, replaced its pharmacy-grade refrigerators and freezers with AccuVax units to automate vaccine storage, monitoring and handling across all of its clinics.

According to clinic managers, the integration of the AccuVax units has helped revolutionize how vaccines are managed and stored, especially given the large area and patient population they service.

Riverside San Bernardino County Indian Health, Inc.

- A consortium of 9 tribes located throughout Riverside and San Bernardino counties in California
- Comprises 7 clinics that collectively serve 100,000 Native Americans annually
- Provides health services to a mix of rural and urban areas spanning 27,000 square miles and more than 75 communities
- More than half of the clinics’ vaccines are designated for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program
- Installed AccuVax systems across every clinic, which was a purposeful decision to help protect vaccine inventory and viability for tribe members that:
 - Improves vaccine storage in rural locations
 - Standardizes vaccine management practices
 - Documents immunization with EMR integration

Other Indian Health Services Using AccuVax as their Primary Vaccine Storage and Handling System:

- American Indian Health Family Services (MI)
- Greenville Rancheria Tribal Health (CA)
- Indian Health at Rincon (CA)
- Norton Sound Health Corporation (AK)
- Native Health (AZ)
- Native American Health Center (CA)
- San Diego American Indian Health (CA)

The Costs of Vaccine Loss

There had been several occasions where moving the vaccines couldn’t be accomplished in a timely manner. As a result, they were no longer viable for patients, Dr. Ferra added. Lost vaccines also meant lost revenue and could have threatened their participation in the federal Vaccines for Children Program (VFC), he said. Something needed to change, so Dr. Ferra, along with CEO Jess Montoya, went to the consortium’s leadership after seeing a demo of this new and innovative system. “We brought the issue to our Board of Directors and they agreed that the AccuVax was a necessary investment,” Dr. Ferra said.

Eliminating Waste and Preventing Loss

Since installing the AccuVax across all seven clinics, Dr. Ferra is happy to report they’ve had no excursions or loss of products. The system safeguards against expired vaccines being administered and includes an audit trail for each dose to ensure every immunization is captured accurately.

Protecting Vaccines and Patients

With AccuVax 24/7 remote monitoring service, Dr. Ferra says it’s been a game changer to know that someone else is keeping an eye on the clinics’ vaccine inventory and temperatures.

Another key difference is that because of the AccuVax’s unique door-less design, gone are the days of frequently opening and closing freezer or refrigerator doors that can invariably cause the internal temperature to rise. The AccuVax consistently keeps each vaccine at its ideal temperature, ensuring integrity of every dose.

It’s been a high-value return on their efforts to help ensure members of their tribes are protected. American Indians are affected by infectious diseases such as influenza, pertussis and hepatitis at much higher rates than other racial/ethnic groups.



“By using the AccuVax Vaccine Management System, we know we have a stock of vaccines that have been faithfully kept and are effective in protecting our patients. These units have taken a lot of sweat off our brow. They are what they are advertised to be— a lifesaver.”

— Dr. Ferra, Clinical Services Director

Efficiently Managing Vaccines and Time

Using AccuVax it's also been much easier to make sure vaccines are always available. With AccuVax's large storage capacity – holding 684 vaccines in the refrigerated portion and 72 in the freezer – and its automatic inventory management tools, you always have accurate, instantaneous visibility of your vaccine inventory. In addition, AccuVax automatically separates VFC and private vaccines and rotates stock to ensure the next expiring vaccine is always dispensed first.

The AccuVax has meaningfully improved efficiencies across all of their clinic sites. Because AccuVax automates 7 of 10 activities in the CDC's VFC Operations Guide, they were able to refocus resources on patient care instead of counting vaccines or recording temperatures.

"It saves time and takes the human factor out of it," says Dr. Ferra. "They're able to process the stock much quicker than they were able to before. Each tray carries one immunization. So, it takes the guesswork out of what you're looking for. You tap the machine and tell it this vaccine is what you want, and it basically drops it in your hand."

The AccuVax System also provides customized user alerting. These real-time alerts are sent to staff about power outages, low inventory, as well as expired and soon-to-expire vaccines.

"What's really great is that we'll also receive the alert 'Hey, you're back on full power,' so we don't have to drop everything when power losses happen. We have at least 15 hours to respond with these alerts and the included battery backup, it gives people time to plan," Dr. Ferra said.

Delivering Peace of Mind

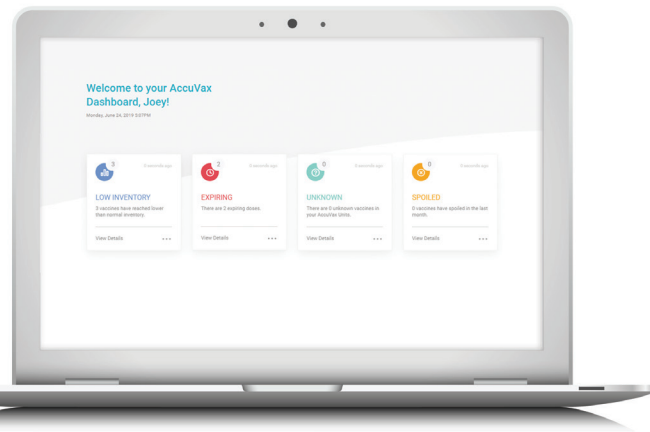
AccuVax is designed to be intuitive and easy to use with minimal training. The learning curve with new staff is incredibly short, and the chances of picking the wrong vaccine has been virtually eliminated. With this system, customers also gain a partner in monitoring and managing their vaccines for their communities.

7 Ways AccuVax Can Help

- Safeguards vaccine integrity, ensuring individuals receive vaccine at optimal potency
- Automates CDC and VFC compliance, including VFC temperature logs and inventory stock reports
- Frees clinical staff time for Top of License care, allowing focus on other tribal health priorities and consults
- Maximizes patient safety
- Minimizes vaccine waste and loss
- Provides real-time inventory accurate to the dose
- Provides an all-in-one solution, including 24/7 monitoring, support, warranty, and maintenance

"It's been revolutionary from where our vaccine management process has been."

— Dr. Ferra, Clinical Services Director





Dispense



Load



Inventory

AccuVax puts vaccine management at your fingertips

- › Protects vaccine integrity and potency with guaranteed temperature management
- › Minimizes vaccine waste, loss, and shrinkage to improve the bottom line
- › Frees staff time for Top of License care
- › Maximizes patient safety and reduces medication errors with intuitive graphical user interface and available EHR integration

See the new AccuVax in action!

Request a demo by contacting us today.



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 **AccuVax®**
Vaccine Management System