



PHARMACIST-PROVIDED IMMUNIZATIONS

Advocating on behalf of Michigan's pharmacy professionals for quality patient care

KEY STATEMENT

Along with managing medication therapy and educating patients on healthy lifestyle practices, certified pharmacists can also administer critical immunizations, ensuring that any treatment received will not interfere with other therapies.



BACKGROUND

Pharmacists continue to play a critical role in improving public health through providing vaccines, and opportunities continue to grow for pharmacists who are certified immunizers. As the most accessible health care providers, pharmacists can help ensure that patients are up-to-date on all their immunizations, as well as answer questions and provide necessary protection from harmful diseases. **The majority of American adults are inadequately vaccinated, leading to an average of 90,000 deaths each year from vaccine-preventable infections.** And although vaccine rates for U.S. children at the time they enter school exceed 95 percent, nearly 25 percent do not complete their primary series by the age of two years. This long-standing failure to adequately immunize the U.S. population helped prompt the inclusion of immunization in Healthy People 2020, a 10-year initiative for improving the health of all Americans. Pharmacists contribute to this effort by administering vaccines where their scope of practice allows and promoting immunization through public health.

WHY ARE PHARMACISTS A VALUABLE SOURCE OF VACCINE DELIVERY?

- **The potential role of pharmacists in addressing the problem of low immunization rates has been recognized by both state and federal government.** In 1999, only 22 states allowed pharmacists to administer influenza vaccinations to adults. In 2007, the number of states allowing this increased to 46, and in June 2009, all 50 states allowed pharmacists to administer influenza vaccinations (under prescribing protocols or prescription) to adults. In addition, the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) established the Pharmacy-Based Immunization Delivery Program in 1996, which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) endorsed. Later, **the CDC granted APhA a liaison position on the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.**
- When it comes to immunizations, **pharmacists have proven to be a critical link to increasing access in a cost effective manner.** Receiving vaccines at a pharmacy increases convenience for patients, with more accessible hours, often without an appointment or a long line in the waiting room.
- **Through providing vaccines, pharmacists continue to show a significant, positive impact on the health and well being of the public.** A study published in 2004 in the journal *Vaccine* found that pharmacists increased immunization uptake 5 to 7 percent across all age groups for states allowing pharmacists to provide immunizations.

BOTTOM LINE

Pharmacists have ample opportunities to advance public health through providing immunizations and advocating for their importance. As their role in vaccination delivery continues to evolve, pharmacy professionals will become more encompassing members of the health care team. This will also assist pharmacies in building loyalty among the general public and diversifying revenue sources.



Additional Information

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