



Alaska Pharmacists Association

Alaska Pharmacist-Immunizers can increase Access and Lower costs

Immunizations reduce the risk of infection by working with the body's natural defenses to help it safely develop immunity to vaccine preventable diseases. Community pharmacists are uniquely positioned to increase immunization rates in Alaska for vaccine-preventable diseases. This is important since the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has indicated that each year approximately 50,000 U.S. adults die from such diseases and their complications (with influenza-related illness accounting for over 70% of such deaths). Additionally, the CDC also has indicated that every \$1 spent on immunizations save over \$10 in direct and indirect societal costs, resulting in aggregate savings of more than \$69 billion in the U.S.

AKPhA supports efforts to expand authority for Alaskan pharmacists to administer all vaccines according to CDC recommendations by reducing burdensome collaborative practice agreements. Studies have shown that states in which pharmacists are granted broad authority to administer vaccines have higher immunization rates.

Key Facts:

- Most pharmacists are already trained to give vaccinations. Certification is part of pharmacy school curricula and over 250,000 pharmacists have been trained to administer vaccinations in the US.
- In 2013 Alaskan community pharmacists administered over 17,000 vaccinations.
- Pharmacies offer greater access to receive immunizations during evening, weekend and holiday hours than other office based providers.
- Pharmacist can provide a cost-effective means of vaccine delivery that can help lower overall healthcare costs.

The recent outbreak of measles cases in the United States has highlighted the need for continued emphasis on the benefits of vaccinations. Pharmacists are highly educated, trained professionals that have unique access to a large segment of the population as well as in rural areas of Alaska. Legislation that would allow Alaskan pharmacists to administer all vaccines, per CDC recommendations, would significantly improve access to vaccinations and public health as a result. We ask for your support to expand the authority of pharmacists to independently administer vaccinations.

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TALKING POINTS – PHARMACISTS AS INDEPENDENT IMMUNIZERS

Pharmacist Training-Certificate

- More than 260,000 pharmacists have been trained nationwide to administer vaccines across the lifespan. The American Pharmacy Association's 20 hour Pharmacy-based Immunization Certificate Training Program (CTP) is recognized by the CDC for its quality and content. The program has been reviewed and developed with input from recognized immunization experts from pharmacy, medicine and public health. Many other healthcare professionals have not undergone the level of immunization training that pharmacists complete.
- The certificate training program covers vaccines across the lifespan (pediatric, adolescent, adult). From the beginning, the training program was created to prepare pharmacists to serve the role of educator, facilitator and/or administer of all ACIP recommended vaccines. Even if a state did not authorize a pharmacist to administer particular vaccines to certain patient populations, pharmacists can serve as a resource in helping patients and caregivers in understanding vaccine schedules and to serve as a knowledgeable resource for their communities.
- The vaccine administration portion of the course trains pharmacists to administer intramuscular vaccines via deltoid muscle administration (recommended for patients 3 years and older), as well as intradermal, subcutaneous and intranasal administration. The patient ages to which pharmacists will ultimately administer vaccines is dependent upon the authority granted by state law, current practice guidelines, scope of practice protocols and procedures, and the needs of their community. All participants are strongly encouraged to obtain CPR or BCLS certification. As a requirement for successful program completion, participants are expected to demonstrate the ability to administer intramuscular, subcutaneous, and intranasal injections.

History of Vaccinations in Alaska

- In 2014, community retail pharmacies administered over 13,000 vaccinations in the State of Alaska; in 2013 that number was just under 18,000. In 2012, Alaska ranking 49th out of 51 states and the District of Columbia for flu vaccines with only 1.2% of the citizens being vaccinated.

Passage of Vaccine Assessment Account in 2014

- With the passage of House Bill 169 in 2014 – Vaccine Assessment Account – it is crucial that we give pharmacists who are located in every community, borough and village, the ability to independently immunize the citizens of Alaska

State Vaccination Reporting Requirement

- Under Alaska State Law, all vaccinations administered must be reported to the Vac Track record keeping report.