Adult Vaccination: What Works

Name of the Organization:
Walgreens: Strong Commitment to Adult Vaccination, Big Results

What We Did and When
Walgreens continues its strong commitment to immunizations, working hard to immunize against flu and other adult vaccines.

Outcome or Results We Got:

**Millions of Shots, Thousands of Locations:** As the nation’s largest pharmacy chain, Walgreens has established a nationwide capacity to vaccinate patients for influenza and other vaccine-preventable diseases. Walgreens administers influenza vaccinations in all of its locations, totaling over 8,000 points of care throughout the United States including Puerto Rico. Walgreens pharmacists deliver more flu shots to Americans than any other entity besides the federal government [1]. Since the start of the 2012-2013 influenza season in August 2012, Walgreens pharmacists have administered over 7 million influenza immunizations.

**Going Beyond Flu Vaccination To Raise Rates of Other Adult Vaccinations:** Walgreens has developed innovative approaches to educating patients and delivering vaccinations beyond flu. Walgreens offers a no-charge comprehensive immunizations assessment with every influenza vaccination administered. Since implementation in August 2012, Walgreens has provided almost 7 million immunization assessments. An “Rx Advisor” system takes the guess work out of “who should be counseled”, “about what”, and at the “what is the right time” when patients are in Walgreens pharmacies. Face-to-face interactions between pharmacists and patients are 3-5 minutes at the point of sale, followed by a prescription pick-up. In 2012, over 300,000 patients were identified and counseled on the importance of receiving pneumococcal disease immunizations. Over 260,000 patients were identified and counseled on the importance of receiving a herpes zoster (shingles) vaccination.

**State and Local Programs: Customized to Meet the Needs**

- **In Rhode Island:** Walgreens has collaborated with the state to administer state-supplied influenza vaccines at no charge in all Walgreens pharmacies throughout the state.
- **In Chicago:** Walgreens worked with the the Chicago Department of Public Health and other Chicago groups to implement Vaccinate Chicago Week during National Influenza Vaccination Week (December 2-8, 2012). The partner groups held clinics throughout Chicago in approximately 400 locations to administer influenza vaccinations. Approximately 16,000 flu shots were administered during the week, which was five times the volume of flu shots administered during the same week in the previous season for those locations. Additionally, 38.7% of vaccinations were administered in medically underserved areas.
- **In Texas:** Stop the Flu! Day initiative helped make flu shots available at no cost to uninsured and underserved residents through a collaborative program with the City of Dallas, Texas.
- **In Boston:** Walgreens and community health centers supported a citywide effort after Mayor Thomas M. Menino’s declaration of a public health emergency for the flu epidemic in January 2013. In one weekend, 24 Walgreens flu clinics throughout the city vaccinated over 7,000 people at no charge.
- **On Election Day 2012:** Walgreens has collaborated with Vote & Vax, a national project that is committed to protecting Americans from influenza, to administer influenza vaccinations in polling places. In the November 2012 presidential election influenza vaccinations were administered at 287 locations during the November 2012 election. The rate of influenza vaccination on Election Day was 32.7% higher in Vote & Vax locations than non-Vote & Vax Walgreens pharmacies (p<0.001).

**Commitment to Reducing Disparities:** Walgreens has worked in partnership with the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to connect with over 500 community organizations to help address health disparities in minority communities and underserved populations. Since 2010, Walgreens has collaborated with these local organizations to donate more than 300,000 vouchers each year, representing $10 million worth of flu vaccines. The vouchers offer flu shots at reduced or no cost to uninsured and underserved residents across the country. Through an extensive network of community organizations, Walgreens has interacted with thousands of nonprofit organizations whose sole purpose is to reach underserved communities. Examples of such organizations include National Urban League, League of United Latin American Citizens, Feeding America, Red Cross, American Diabetes Association, AARP, and many more.

One example of an initiative to connect with underserved communities is the First Ladies Health Initiative, a Walgreens-sponsored campaign to educate African Americans about preventive illnesses that disproportionately affect Black communities. The initiative brings together over 100 First Ladies (wives of ministers) of African-American churches and healthcare professionals around the city to learn about major illnesses such as cardiovascular health, obesity, diabetes, and HIV/AIDS. This is followed by the First Ladies Health Day, provides medical screenings by special health care workers on-site at participating churches and includes on-site clinics to administer flu shots to those in attendance. Through the First Ladies Health Initiative, Walgreens raised awareness of the need for immunizations in the African-American community.

**Leveraging Technology:** A current Walgreens initiative is focused on clinical data exchange between pharmacies and state public health departments. Walgreens has enacted a state registry reporting program, which shares patient immunization records with state public health departments. Walgreens pharmacies are currently reporting to registries in 24 states, with an additional 11 states planning to implement partnerships in Spring 2013. The second phase of the partnership will include...
bidirectional functionality, allowing Walgreens pharmacists to access state registries to view patients’ immunization history, including immunizations given at outside providers, in order to further inform immunization recommendations and collaborate with physicians.

**Commitment Goes International:** Walgreens has extended its collaborative network internationally by donating more than $9 million worth of influenza vaccines to the nation of Laos. As flu season approached Southeast Asia in April 2012, Walgreens donated 375,000 doses of seasonal influenza vaccine to the Ministry of Health. Health officials have designated these 375,000 doses for people at high risk of flu complications in that country, including pregnant women, seniors and people with chronic health conditions such as heart and lung disease.

**About Our Organization:**
Walgreens is the nation's largest pharmacy chain, with over 8000 drugstores and 240,000 employees. They filled 784 million prescriptions in fiscal year 2012. Founded in 1901, Walgreens is visited by 6.3 million customers daily.

**Our Organization’s Website:** [http://www.walgreens.com/default.jsp](http://www.walgreens.com/default.jsp)

**Citations:**

- "Vaccinations Administered During Off-Clinic Hours at a National Community Pharmacy: Implications for Increasing Patient Access and Convenience" (In Press, Annals of Family Medicine, 2013)