

What Works

To Improve Adult Immunization

What They Did:

Pharmacists have a strong and active history in promoting adult immunization services in the United States. In 1997, the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) Board of Trustees adopted pharmacists' role in being vaccine advocates, achieving and maintaining competence to administer immunizations, documenting immunizations and reporting adverse events, and educating patients about immunizations. Pharmacists in retail and independent pharmacies have made significant contributions to improving immunization rates, ensuring quality services and building collaboration in their communities.

The "immunization neighborhood" concept has been spearheaded by pharmacists and is defined as "collaboration, coordination, and communication among immunization stakeholders, with the goal of meeting the immunization needs of patients and protecting the community from vaccine-preventable diseases."

Pharmacists bring special strengths to national goals to increase adult immunization rates. They have strengthened their electronic immunization documentation practices. They have piloted innovations for assessing the vaccination status of their patients and offering vaccines or providing referrals.

APhA developed a pharmacist immunization certificate training program that has trained over 230,000 pharmacists in the United States in pharmacy-based immunization delivery services. The certificate program includes modules on:

- Pharmacists as vaccine advocates
- Immunology
- Vaccine-preventable diseases
- Implementing an immunization practice
- Vaccine administration

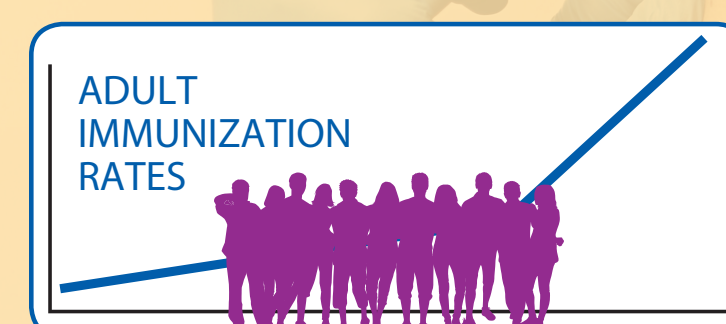
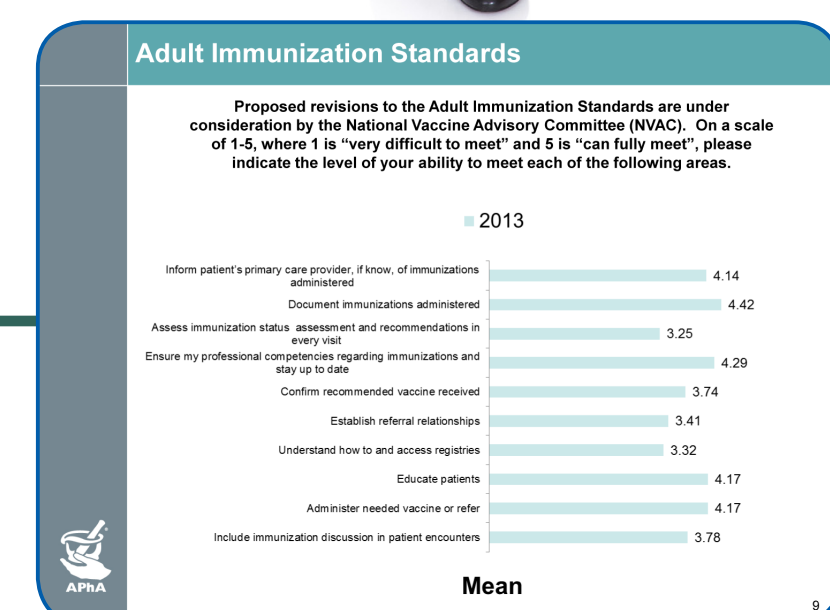
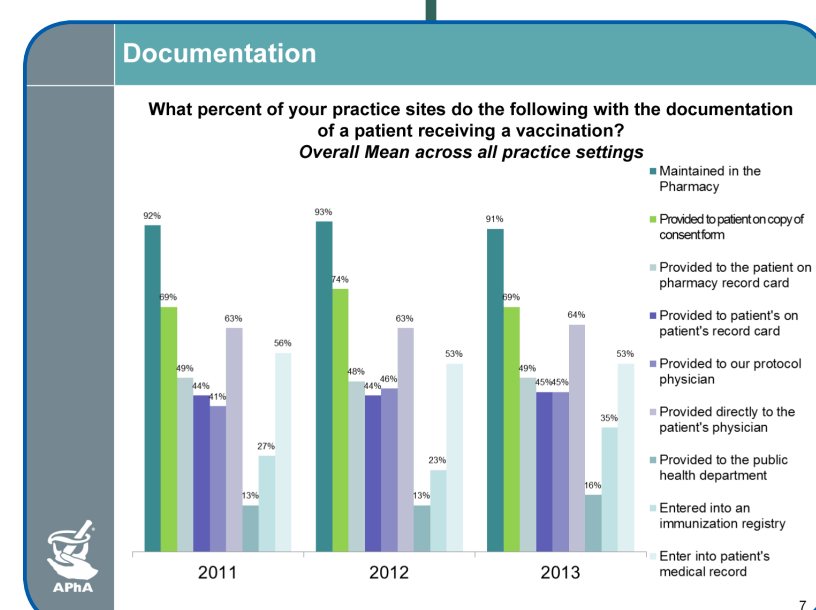
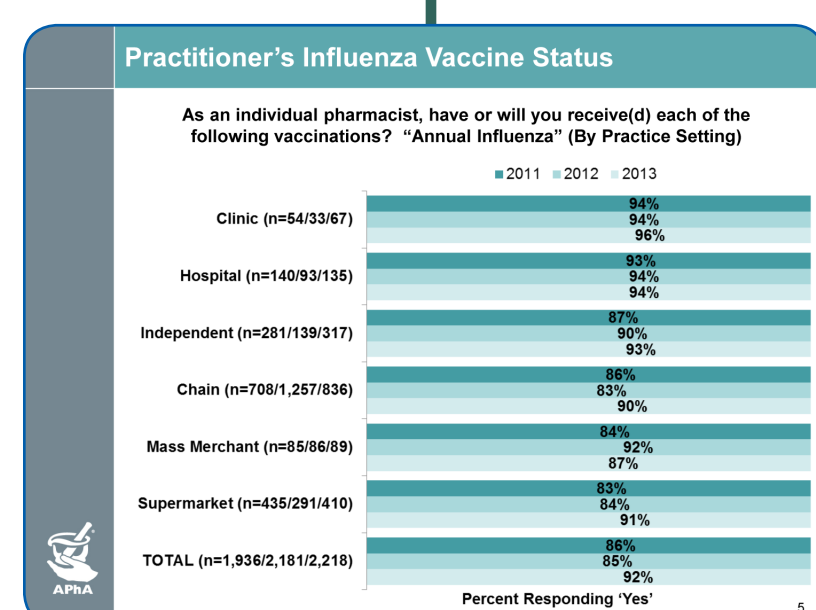
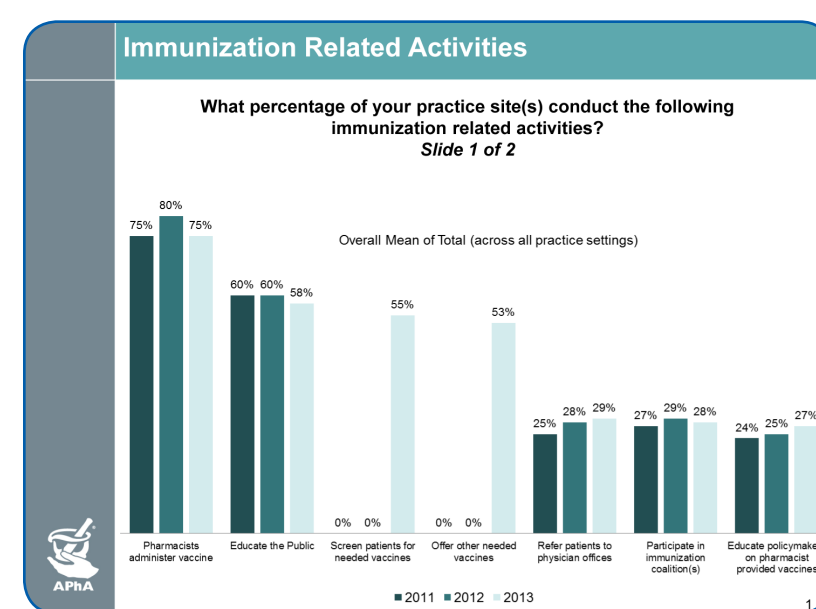
With the publication of the National Vaccine Advisory Committee's updated Standards for Adult Immunization Practice, pharmacists have continued to build patient referral relationships and reduce potential patient barriers to vaccination. Supported by the National Vaccine Program Office, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, APhA conducted a national Internet-based survey in 2013. The survey findings highlighted improvements in patient referral practices among providers and better immunization documentation.

Results:

From August 24 to September 14, 2013, APhA sent email surveys to 32,603 pharmacists in all pharmacy practice settings. Among the 6,702 pharmacists who viewed the email invitation to participate, 2,351 (35%) pharmacists responded. APhA found that:

1. Pharmacies expand access to immunization
 - 77% of pharmacies offered vaccinations without appointments
 - Pharmacies offered influenza (88%), pneumococcal (77%), Herpes zoster (75%), tetanus (57%), hepatitis B (47%), hepatitis A (43%), meningococcal (43%), and human papillomavirus (37%) vaccines; and vaccines for international travel (25%) and pediatric patients (10%)
2. More physicians are referring patients to pharmacies for immunizations
 - 88% of pharmacists received patient referrals from physicians (compared to 84% in 2012)
 - 9% of pharmacists had standing orders with the public health department
3. More steps should be taken for pharmacies to document immunizations with electronic medical records and state immunization registries
 - 91% of pharmacists maintained documentation of patients receiving vaccinations in the pharmacy and 53% entered vaccinations into patient medical records
 - 64% of pharmacists provided documentation directly to the patients' physicians
 - 35% of pharmacists entered patients' vaccinations into immunization registries

Pharmacy-based Immunizations: Growing and Improving Adult Immunization Services



For more information:
<http://www.pharmacist.com/pharmacy-based-immunizations-growing-improving>

This "What Works" vignette is one in a series of examples collected by the Provider Workgroup of the National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit. For more information or to nominate an example of "what works" to improve adult immunization, go to <http://www.izsummitpartners.org/>. This vignette does not constitute an endorsement from any of the organizations that participate in the Provider Workgroup or the NAII.

