

What Works

To Improve Adult Immunization

What They Did:

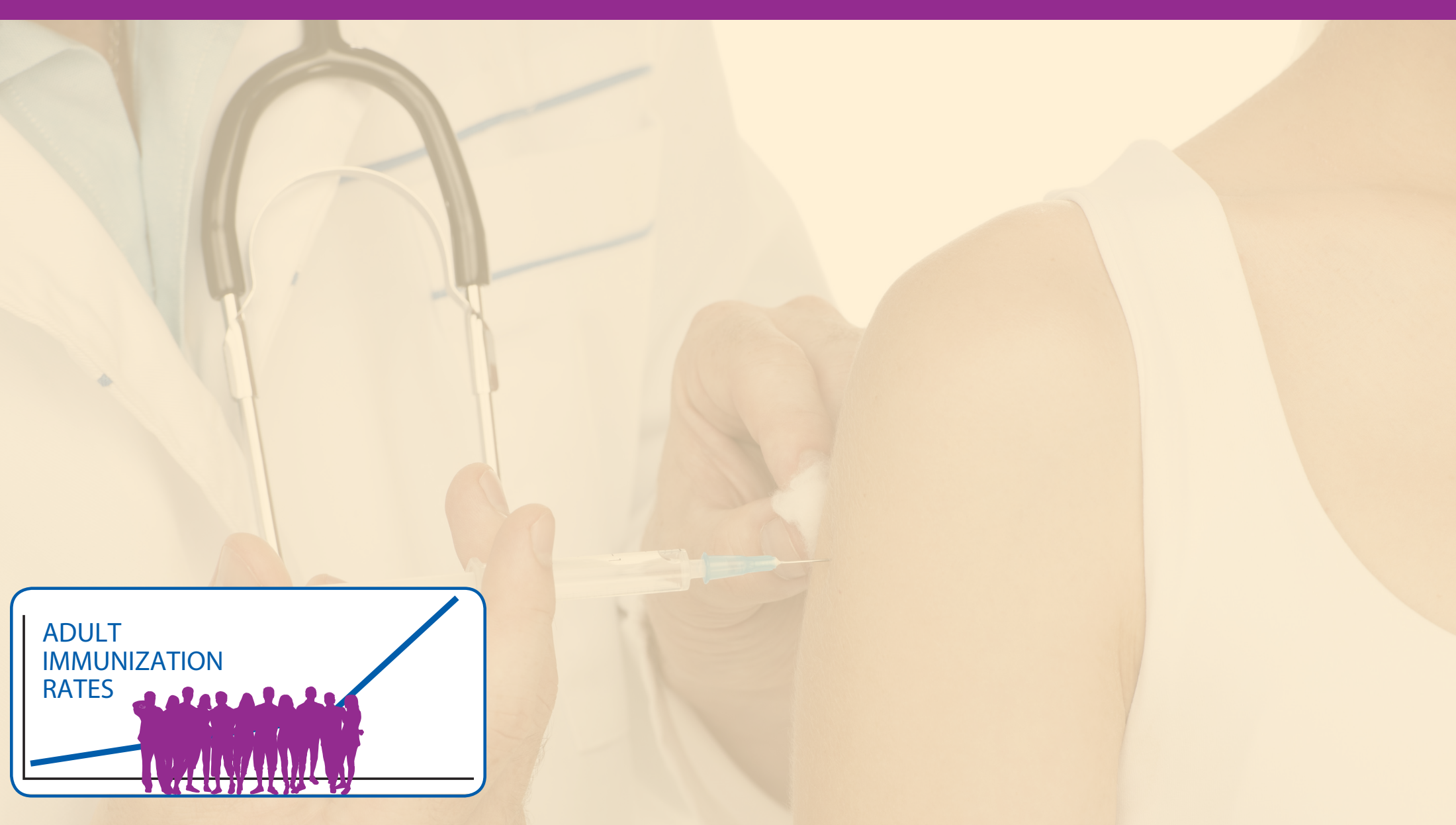
Walgreens made a commitment to make the immunization assessment a routine part of patient care. Their efforts to introduce this service and improve the overall patient flow for vaccinations, demonstrates a successful example of the implementation of the new adult vaccination standards.

A series of actions to bring about system change in Walgreens pharmacies included the following:

- Integration of the routine immunization assessment into their interactions with patients on a step-by-step basis. Walgreens first offered routine immunizations assessments to their patients who received a flu vaccination. The next step was to focus on patients with high-risk conditions. Their year-long plan also took advantage of seasonal campaigns in the back-to-school and holiday seasons.
- Documenting immunizations in immunization registries, thereby making it possible for a patient's primary care provider to access. Walgreens now works with state immunization information systems (IISs) in 43 states.
- Efforts have been made to engage payers at both the Pharmacy Benefit Management and health plan level. This continues to lead to improved access for a large population of persons who have insurance coverage but have not yet received the service.

Training remains a key cornerstone of the Walgreens immunization program. All Walgreens pharmacists received the immunization certificate of the American Pharmacist Association attesting to their competency. Further training by Walgreens includes a clinical foundation to ensure ACIP and CDC guidelines are followed.

The retail pharmacy has a far-reaching presence across all 50 states. They are also present and trusted in many hard-to-reach urban and rural communities.



Walgreens:

Setting A "Standard" for the Standards Even Before They Were Finalized



For more information:

https://www.walgreens.com/pharmacy/immunization/immunization_index.jsp

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 NAIIIS.

Results:

Walgreens demonstrates a successful example of how to integrate routine vaccination assessment into clinical practice.

This was achieved through a series of system change actions that included:

- Routine immunization assessment for its patients
- Stronger practices in immunization documentation
- Better communication with other healthcare providers
- Walgreens carried out more than 6 million immunization assessments in 2012/13.

They were able to connect to Immunization Information Systems in over 40 states.

The program focuses on all 17 CDC recommended vaccines. Both pneumococcal and zoster vaccines are major focal points in the program.

They found that they needed to introduce vaccine counseling in a step-by-step manner.

Quality assurance is integral to the program. Walgreens uses a systematic approach to ensure all patients are screened and assessed to determine vaccine needs.

Their efforts, over a period of several years, demonstrate a prescient commitment to the National Adult Immunization Standards, well in advance of the official February 20, 2014 publication date of the Standards document.

Key learnings center around the following areas:

- Assessing all patients
- Communication to all health providers to close the loop
- Population Health tools incorporated into the practice of pharmacy

