Recognizing the value and extraordinary contributions pharmacists provide to improving the vaccination rates in their communities

AWARDS 2016

Presentation and Reception

Sunday, March 6, 2016
Baltimore, Maryland

The APhA Immunization Champion Awards program is supported by Merck, Seqirus and VaxServe for 2016.
The American Pharmacists Association established these special awards in 2008 to recognize the value and extraordinary contributions pharmacists provide to improving the vaccination rates in their communities. Across the country, more than 280,000 pharmacists have completed training as immunization providers. In all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, pharmacists have the authority to administer vaccines. Pharmacists and student pharmacists have assumed one or more roles as immunization educators, facilitators, and vaccine administrators, thereby reducing vaccine-preventable morbidity and mortality across the lifespan.

Pharmacists, in collaboration with physicians, public health officials, and other immunization stakeholders, are recognized as important members of the immunization neighborhood. Millions of vaccines are administered by pharmacists each year. The profession’s dedication to meeting the public’s immunization needs and protecting people from vaccine-preventable diseases is evident in the work of this year’s nominees and the many thousands of immunizing pharmacists practicing in communities nationwide.

The APhA Immunization Champion Awards consist of six categories of recognition, including individual practitioners, friend of pharmacy’s immunization efforts, corporation/institution, partnership with other health care providers and public health, community outreach, and pharmacy team member. Nominees were evaluated based on the areas of impact, collaboration, originality, and overcoming challenges, as well as for creating opportunities for pharmacists. The nomination packets received this year described the work of innovative immunizing pharmacists, practices, and community leaders. Many of the nominees provided services and outreach that expanded beyond influenza vaccination and focused on implementation of the National Vaccine Advisory Committee (NVAC) Standards for Adult Immunization Practice. APhA applauds all pharmacists who are working toward improving the health of the people in their communities. APhA also recognizes Merck, Seqirus, and VaxServe for their support of this awards and recognition program.
Pharmacists have made significant strides over the past 20 years, increasing access to immunizations and protecting individuals from vaccine-preventable diseases. The scope of authority for pharmacists has expanded, supported by a public health need and the actions of immunizing pharmacists. Furthermore, patients’ positive perceptions and acceptance of pharmacists as immunizers have grown. Critical to this growth has been APhA’s Pharmacy-Based Immunization Delivery Certificate Training Program (CTP). The CTP began in 1996 and has trained more than 280,000 pharmacists. This has been accomplished through partnerships with schools and colleges of pharmacy, state pharmacy associations, pharmacy corporations, and a dedicated group of faculty and staff. The program prepares pharmacists to assume active roles as members of the immunization neighborhood to serve patients across their lifespan. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recognized APhA’s gold standard CTP for its content and quality. Recognizing the importance of keeping current on ACIP recommendations, APhA provides webinars after each ACIP meeting. The organization also provides additional education and training on contemporary immunization issues, publications and networking opportunities to support pharmacists’ role as informed and knowledgeable members of the immunization neighborhood.

APhA applauds pharmacists across the country who are making a difference to their patients and communities. This anniversary is a celebration of these individuals.
Snapshot of progress over the past 20 Years

More than 280,000 pharmacists trained to administer vaccines (up from 40,000 in 2007)

All 50 states, DC, and PR authorize pharmacists to administer vaccines at some level (in 1996, 14 states authorized pharmacists for influenza vaccination)

Pharmacists increase access to vaccines across the lifespan

Pharmacists are trained about vaccines across the lifespan and are helping patients complete vaccine series

All ACPE-accredited schools of pharmacy required to include immunization training in their curricula (2016)

Number of adults getting influenza vaccinations in community pharmacies increases from 6% of adults (2004–2005) to about 25% (2015–2016)

APhA House of Delegates passes policy (2007, 2011) for all pharmacists being up to date on their own vaccinations (rates have approached 90%)

APhA given liaison seat on ACIP; pharmacist appointed to NVAC

APhA coins the concept of the “immunization neighborhood” — collaborating, coordinating, and communicating with other immunization stakeholders

H1N1 flu pandemic (2009) highlights pharmacists as important immunization providers

Pharmacies target immunization messages to patients by screening pharmacy records and patients’ medication use to identify need for specific vaccinations

Pharmacists implement Travel Health programs

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PROGRAM
Sunday, March 6, 2016

5:30 pm  Reception Opens
5:45 pm  Opening Remarks
5:55 pm  Presentation of Awards

INDIVIDUAL PRACTITIONER
   Honorable Mention
   Deanne Hall (Pittsburgh, PA)
   Anne Skoe (Sartell, MN)
   National Winner
   Holly Van Lew (Phoenix, AZ)

FRIEND OF PHARMACY
   National Winner
   Bruce Gellin (Washington, DC)

CORPORATION/INSTITUTION
   Honorable Mention
   Realo Discount Drugs (New Bern, NC)
   SUPERVALU Pharmacies (Eden Prairie, MN)
   National Winner
   Giant Eagle Pharmacy (Pittsburgh, PA)

PARTNERSHIP
   Honorable Mention
   Cape Fear Clinic (Wilmington, NC)
   National Winner
   Maryland Partnership for Prevention (Owings Mills, MD)

COMMUNITY OUTREACH
   Honorable Mention
   West Penn Hospital Immunization Clinic (Pittsburgh, PA)
   National Winner
   Pratik Patel (Detroit, MI)

PHARMACY TEAM MEMBER
   National Winner
   Kathie Smith (Alton, IL)

6:40 pm  Reception Continues
7:00 pm  Adjournment
Individual Practitioner Past Recipients

2015:
National Winners
– Kelechi Aguwa, Kenneth McCall
Honorable Mention
– Mary Choy, MAJ Brandi Schuyler, Maria Young

2014:
National Winners
– Eric Crumbaugh, Julie Gambiani
Honorable Mention
– Carlisha Gentles, Todd McWilliams, George Veltri

2013:
National Winners
– Donald Auwinger, Kerri Okamura
Honorable Mention
– Carl Wright

2012:
National Winner
– Marty Fellner
Honorable Mention
– Karen Horbowicz, Paras Chokshi, Dan Heller

2011:
National Winners
– C. Derris Hurley, Michelle G. Johnson
Honorable Mention
– Ruben D. Atencio, Ashley Branham, Monali N. Majmudar

2010:
National Winners
– Dennis C. Galuzzo, Katherine Schmoll Probst
Honorable Mention
– Louis Carl Fontana, Adam C. Welch

2009:
National Winners
– Vincent A. Hartzell, Paul A. Schiavi
Honorable Mention
– Edward Christofano, Joe Heidrick
Individual Practitioner

Honorable Mention

Deanne Hall, PharmD, CDE, BCACP
University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy

**Deanne L. Hall, PharmD, CDE, BCACP**, is Associate Professor of Pharmacy and Therapeutics at the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy. She has helped improve vaccination rates throughout the university. Since 2009, Dr. Hall has worked with the Assistant Vice Chancellor of University Benefits to increase immunization rates on campus by providing flu shots to faculty, staff, students, and their families at no cost. Prior to this ongoing initiative, no university-wide program had supported, encouraged, and provided influenza vaccination for the community. Dr. Hall leads an interprofessional team of more than 15 pharmacists, pharmacy residents, and nurse immunizers. Through this initiative, 3,338 patients received flu shots during the 2015–16 influenza season. She has trained more than 1,000 pharmacists and student pharmacists to administer vaccinations. Dr. Hall is wholly committed to training pharmacists and student pharmacists to vaccinate and to increase immunization rates in her community.
Individual Practitioner

*Honorable Mention*

**Anne Skoe, BSPharm**

Coborn’s Pharmacy

**Anne Skoe, BSPharm,** was keenly aware that adults don’t keep as meticulous records of their own immunization status as they do of the vaccines that their children receive. Adults are not vaccinated as often, and when they are, they may receive their immunizations in multiple settings and fail to keep track of them. Skoe wanted to take the mystery out of adult immunizations for her patients. When her pharmacy’s computer system prints automatic reminders for patients to get shingles and influenza vaccines, or when patients come in for their flu shots, Skoe takes the opportunity to check the Minnesota Immunization Information Connection (MIIC) for any other vaccines the patients may need. She lists the recommended vaccines and corresponding copays on a printout and discusses them with her patients. Skoe and her team are also always on the lookout for patients who smoke, have respiratory diseases, or have diabetes, and they suggest pneumococcal vaccines to those in need of immunization. Some patients get the recommended vaccines on the spot. Others may question the MIIC’s records and promise Skoe they’ll follow up with their physician about the vaccines. Unwilling to lose these patients to follow up, Skoe offers to immediately contact the physician office to get a second opinion on the vaccine recommendations.
LCDR Holly Van Lew, PharmD, BCPS, NCPS, a Clinical Pharmacist in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, is Director of the Pharmacy Immunization Clinic at a large Indian Health Service medical center in Phoenix, Arizona. The walk-in clinic serves patients aged 15 years and older. LCDR Van Lew oversees 35 pharmacists and student pharmacists in the flu clinic and an additional 17 pharmacists who administer all the ACIP recommended vaccines. In 2015, more than 44,000 vaccines were administered to children and adults at the medical center, substantially increasing rates for zoster, HPV, and Tdap. She is also the Vaccines for Children site manager, for which she procures, stores, monitors, and makes all vaccine-related decisions; her efforts have helped save the medical center $1.8 million in vaccine costs.

LCDR Van Lew identifies and addresses numerous missed immunization opportunities throughout the medical center. She increased access by advocating for all routine vaccines to be stocked in ten inpatient/outpatient settings. Taking over management, acquisition, distribution, and monitoring of all vaccines on campus, LCDR Van Lew has taken responsibility for more than $700,000 in adult vaccines and reduced vaccine waste to less than $500 per year.

Through education campaigns, LCDR Van Lew has motivated nurses to embrace the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations to address immunizations at every visit. She successfully advocated for a protocol that would allow all nurses at the medical center to offer all routine vaccines. In 2015, she provided 20 education sessions to more than 250 providers across specialties and professions to increase vaccine awareness, integrate vaccination into workflows, and devise and implement better ways to use electronic health records and screening tools in this endeavor. Nationally, LCDR Van Lew has collaborated on large research studies with CDC and the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases to better understand and improve adult vaccination rates.
Friend of Pharmacy
Past Recipients
2015: Paul Jarris, MD, MBA
2014: William Schaffner, MD
2013: Carolyn Buxton Bridges, MD
2012: Deborah Wexler, MD
2011: Elizabeth Rosenblum, MD
2010: RADM Newton E. Kendig, MD
2009: Litjen "LJ" Tan, PhD
Friend of Pharmacy

National Winner

Bruce Gellin, MD, MPH

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Bruce Gellin, MD, MPH, is Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health and Director of the National Vaccine Program Office (NVPO) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). He is the principal technical, strategic, and policy advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Health on all aspects of the National Vaccine Program. Congress created NVPO to provide leadership and coordination among federal agencies and other immunization stakeholders, including states and municipalities, health care providers, foundations, and private-sector entities including vaccine manufacturers, biotechnology companies, and insurers.

Dr. Gellin's leadership at NVPO includes updating and implementing the National Vaccine Plan, the nation’s roadmap for a vaccine and immunization enterprise in the 21st century. This plan recognizes the role of pharmacists and other immunization stakeholders in improving immunization access and delivery. Dr. Gellin’s work with the National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit, among other forums, has provided an opportunity for pharmacists to demonstrate their value to the immunization neighborhood and facilitate collaboration among stakeholders. He brings pharmacists to the table with other members of the immunization neighborhood and garners recognition for pharmacists and pharmacies as accessible and capable immunization providers. Dr. Gellin has embraced the concept of the immunization neighborhood and the leadership role of pharmacists within these teams. The President’s Cancer Panel Plan for Cervical Cancer, the HHS Adult Immunization Plan, and the NVAC Adult Immunization Standards particularly call out pharmacists as valued providers who can impact immunization access and delivery and can influence progress toward achieving plan goals.

As one of the nation’s leading experts on vaccines and immunizations, Dr. Gellin chairs the American Cancer Society’s HPV Roundtable Pharmacy Task Force, which is exploring collaboration between HPV vaccination stakeholders and pharmacists that would ultimately lead to increased HPV vaccination rates. Dr. Gellin exemplifies the characteristics of an immunization champion and is applauded for his unwavering support of the pharmacist’s role as immunizer.
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National Winner</th>
<th>Honorable Mention</th>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Walgreens Co.</td>
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<td>Target</td>
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<td>Rite Aid</td>
<td>Children's Medical Center-Dallas, TX</td>
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<td>Walgreens</td>
<td>Tim Mitchell Medical, Inc.</td>
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<td>The Kroger Co. Family of Pharmacies</td>
<td>West Milford Pharmacy</td>
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Realo Discount Drugs
New Bern, North Carolina

Realo Discount Drugs is a 17-store chain of pharmacies that is locally owned and operating in eastern North Carolina. Realo has leveraged its unique status within the communities it serves to proactively engage with school systems, health fairs, local businesses, assisted-living communities, and apartment communities to offer on-site immunizations in each of these settings. Realo was able to provide several thousand educators and school district staff with influenza, Tdap, pneumococcal, and shingles vaccines. In 2014, in response to an increase in whooping cough in the region, Realo participated in health fairs and visited apartment complexes to educate the public on the importance of immunization. The next year, vaccination rates increased by 6.6%. Realo also participated in RxVaccinate, an educational research project, in an effort to increase pneumococcal vaccination rates at two pharmacies in the intervention group.

Vaccinations are offered at every Realo pharmacy location and incorporated directly into pharmacy workflow with minimal wait time. During medication reviews, Realo pharmacists use the North Carolina Immunization Registry to determine whether patients are up to date on vaccines. If vaccine status for a particular patient is not registered, pharmacy staff reach out to the primary care provider. When patients are missing vaccines, the pharmacist lets the patient know and provides the needed vaccines. Realo has also collaborated with local dentist offices to vaccinate staff, as well as interested patients. In addition to attending to patients’ immunization needs in the pharmacy, Realo pharmacists frequently provide in-home vaccinations, blood pressure checks, and full medication reviews for patients who cannot get to the pharmacy.
Corporation/Institution

Honorable Mention

SUPERVALU Pharmacies
Eden Prairie, Minnesota

SUPERVALU Pharmacies employs 500 pharmacists who, along with their pharmacy teams, are dedicated to providing optimal patient care and finding innovative ways to grow and develop the immunization patient base in the 188 grocery stores where they serve. Early adoption of an immunization program placed SUPERVALU at the forefront of the profession, as they negotiated for reimbursement for the vaccines. In 2001 SUPERVALU Pharmacies partnered with APhA as a licensed partner for the Pharmacy-Based Immunization Delivery program. This gave them a group of their own pharmacists with the ability to train their peers. Nearly a decade ago, SUPERVALU updated their job description, requiring all pharmacists to complete the immunization training program and be active immunizers in the community. SUPERVALU pharmacists and technicians have extended their outreach to offer vaccinations beyond the grocery stores. Through its immunization program, SUPERVALU has conducted multiyear community outreach, providing on-site vaccination clinics and patient screenings. Pharmacy teams cultivate relationships with local community groups and stakeholders, providing more than 200 annual immunization clinics at churches, colleges, small businesses, and senior-housing facilities.

Recently, SUPERVALU Pharmacies celebrated 5 successful years of its proprietary intervention program, which assists pharmacists in driving clinical outcomes within pharmacy workflow. Since the program’s development, pharmacists have made 340,000 interventions. The results have directly improved education and awareness of shingles and increased vaccine administration. SUPERVALU has also successfully implemented a travel clinic; its multifaceted program consists of patient consultation and education regarding travel-related health topics, administration of appropriate vaccines based on current guidelines, and provision of prophylactic medications to prevent diseases endemic to specific regions.
Corporation/Institution

National Winner

Giant Eagle Pharmacy
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Giant Eagle Pharmacy is an integral part of Giant Eagle, one of the 40 largest privately held and family-operated companies in the United States. Its clinical coordinator team has administered more than 14,000 immunizations across 435 on-site clinics, representing an 80% increase in immunizations last year alone. Founded in 1931, Giant Eagle serves more than five million customers annually at nearly 400 retail locations in Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia and Maryland.

Based in Pittsburgh, Giant Eagle fosters relationships with employer groups, vaccine manufacturers, and local universities, as well as within the communities it serves, to increase immunization rates and to improve education among patients and pharmacy team members alike. Collaborating with employer groups, such as the Pittsburgh Business Group on Health, Giant Eagle reaches multiple large employers within the Pittsburgh area. The flexibility of their program allows for on-site immunization for influenza, pneumococcal disease, shingles, tetanus, and hepatitis B, either during the same visit or on follow-up visits to the employer. When employees are unable to attend clinics, vouchers allow them to receive immunizations at their convenience at a local Giant Eagle Pharmacy. “Lunch and Learn” sessions, by pharmacists, educate employees on common adult immunizations and have resulted in immunization rates with the employer.

Working with an increase in student pharmacists, the company has teamed up with local pharmacy schools in support of APHA Academy of Student Pharmacists’ Operation Immunization. Their community outreach includes on-site clinics within multiple school districts, police departments, and senior centers. A new collaboration with their protocol physicians expanded the company’s ability to immunize pediatric patients against influenza and other vaccine-preventable diseases as allowed by law in communities within Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, and Indiana. Giant Eagle has also provided educational outreach to improve immunization awareness at several large events, including the American Diabetes Association’s Bridge to Wellness Expo in Pittsburgh.
Partnership Past Recipients

2015:
National Winner
– Garth Reynolds, Illinois Pharmacists Association

2014:
National Winner
– White County, Arkansas Local Health Unit
Honorable Mention
– Lifetime Health Medical Group

2013:
National Winner
– The University of Texas at El Paso Student Health Center
Honorable Mention
– IPHARM

2012:
National Winner
– University of Missouri–Kansas City School of Pharmacy
Honorable Mention
– Tieton Village Drugs

2011:
National Winner
– The Buffalo Psychiatric Center, New York State Office of Mental Health
Honorable Mention
– USPHS/ISH/Phoenix Indian Medical Center

2010:
National Winner
– Touro College of Pharmacy
Honorable Mention
– Washington State University College of Pharmacy

2009:
– Oregon Pharmacists Association
Partnership
Honorable Mention

Cape Fear Clinic
Wilmington, North Carolina

Cape Fear Clinic is an interprofessional medical home serving low-income, uninsured patients in a four-county area of southeastern North Carolina. The patient care team includes physicians, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, nurses, behavioral health professionals, dentists, dental hygienists, and a variety of learners from different disciplines, as well as administrative and support staff. In 2015, spearheaded by the clinic’s Chief Pharmacy Officer, these diverse professionals joined together to fulfill their commitment to provide all vaccinations recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to the patients in their care. Since January 2015, Cape Fear Clinic has provided more than 1,300 vaccine doses and counting, valued at more than $100,000, free of charge. While vaccine administration takes place largely in the clinic’s pharmacy department, the program depends on clinic physicians, nurses, and support staff, as well as local, national, and global partners.

Student pharmacists screen electronic health records and patient profiles in North Carolina’s Immunization Registry to identify patients missing vaccines. Nurses and other staff also assist in identifying patients. Cape Fear Clinic obtains the vaccines through a combination of support from charitable donations, local and international relief efforts, manufacturer replenishment programs, and prescription assistance programs. Acquiring the vaccines is the result of a complex process that requires communication, coordination, and meticulous record keeping. Cape Fear Clinic demonstrates how a variety of partners can come together to immunize and improve the care of uninsured patients in a local community.

Jennifer Buxton, PharmD, CPP, FASHP, Chief Pharmacy Officer
Partnership
National Winner

Maryland Partnership for Prevention
Owings Mills, Maryland

Maryland Partnership for Prevention (MPP), the state’s immunization coalition, has stepped in to coordinate school-based flu shot clinics in the face of dwindling federal funding. Federal financial support has decreased every year for the last 5 years, and local stakeholders anticipate the federal fund will eventually be eliminated altogether. Joining an established partnership, MPP is helping to sustain and expand school-based vaccination efforts. In an unprecedented effort, the immunization coalition is seeking to establish a system through which local health departments can bill for vaccines provided in schools in order to support school- and community-based flu clinics.

In their inaugural year of involvement, MPP coordinated clinics in Baltimore County, where they delivered nearly 1,000 flu shots, as well as Howard County, where they delivered 8,400 flu shots. During the course of the clinics, there were sometimes as many as 1,000 flu vaccines given at five to six schools per day. MPP used the services of 31 nurses, 3 pharmacists, and 28 student pharmacists to provide these vaccines to elementary and middle school students. The coalition worked with the school systems to coordinate the events, the immunizers, and the supplies. MPP coordinated these clinics in addition to its ongoing regular activities.

Through regular meetings and educational programming, MPP expands the capacity of immunization delivery. Its “Practice Makes Perfect” series, which utilizes the help of pharmacist trainers, has educated more than 400 health professionals on vaccine administration, storage, and handling. The coalition provides mini-grants to support members’ special programming. MPP is a long-time supporter of pharmacists as part of the immunization neighborhood.
Community Outreach Past Recipients

2015:
National Winner
– Mayank Amin
Honorable Mention
– Safeway Pharmacy

2014:
National Winner
– Monali Majmudar
Honorable Mention
– Allison Dering-Anderson

2013:
National Winner
– University of California-San Diego Student-Run Free Clinics
Honorable Mention
– University of Oklahoma

2012:
National Winner
– University of Illinois at Chicago College of Pharmacy

2011:
National Winner
– Pequot Pharmaceutical Network (PRxN) FluCru
Honorable Mention
– University of Georgia College of Pharmacy

2010:
National Winner
– Ukrop’s Pharmacy
Honorable Mention
– Share Our Selves Free Medical Clinic

2009:
National Winner
– HEB

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Community Outreach

Honorable Mention

West Penn Hospital Immunization Clinic
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

At West Penn Hospital Immunization Clinic, a team of pharmacists, physicians, and nurses established several immunization services within the hospital and throughout the community. The clinic offers immunizations on a walk-in basis 5 days a week. As part of the larger Allegheny Health Network, the clinic pharmacists immunize the health system’s employees during annual wellness checks and medication education consultations. Clinic pharmacists have also partnered with physicians in the bone marrow transplant program at West Penn Hospital to vaccinate patients who have undergone bone marrow transplant. This patient population loses all previous immunity after a transplant and requires comprehensive revaccination. Pharmacists follow these patients for the next 2 years to complete the revaccination process. The immunization clinic coordinates visit times to prevent excessive travel and patient loss to follow-up.

In addition to in-clinic immunization opportunities, the pharmacists provide services in the community. They have provided flu shots to community members at local farmers’ markets, holiday parades, and high school and collegiate sporting events. Pharmacists assess patients to determine whether they are candidates for the flu shot, and some patients are referred to the clinic for additional vaccinations when needed. The immunization clinic has also partnered with local college and professional sports teams, including the Pittsburgh Pirates, to provide yearly influenza and travel vaccines when necessary. These services are provided during team practices at the sports venue to ensure compliance among all team members. In 2015, West Penn Hospital Immunization Clinic pharmacists provided more than 1,000 vaccines. They also work with the hospital’s obstetrics and gynecology service to provide vaccinations, including influenza, Tdap, pneumococcal, and varicella zoster to family members of new and expectant mothers. They will soon station a pharmacist on the obstetrics and gynecology unit for up to 10 hours weekly to provide vaccinations to family members on the mother/baby unit in the hospital. Furthermore, the clinic pharmacists plan to provide walk-in services for patients receiving prenatal care at their location.
Community Outreach

National Winner

Pratik Patel, PharmD
Meijer Pharmacy, Detroit, Michigan

Pratik Patel, PharmD, is Pharmacy Team Leader at Meijer Pharmacy in Detroit, Michigan. He has transformed the basic grocery store pharmacy into a health care resource center that specializes in providing immunizations to a severely underserved population. A federally designated health professional shortage area, Dr. Patel’s community has only a fraction of the primary care physicians deemed necessary by federal standards. Long interested in health disparities, Dr. Patel saw many unmet health care needs in his community. He realized that it would take much more than offering immunizations at his pharmacy to make an impact. He worked closely with Wayne State University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences to expand education opportunities and community outreach. He also worked with the store director to reach out to local organizations and learn about the health needs of the community.

Dr. Patel established a collaboration with the Brightmoor Alliance, a local faith-based organization dedicated to revitalizing the community. Collectively recognizing the burden of influenza and the need for affordable and accessible vaccines, Dr. Patel, Meijer Pharmacy, and the Brightmoor Alliance developed a program that would provide more than 300 flu shots, free of charge, to residents of the Brightmoor community during the 2015–16 flu season. This community partnership is just one of the innovative strategies Dr. Patel has employed to increase immunization education, access, and delivery. He also participates in community events in Detroit, which has helped him gain community trust as a new health care professional in the area. At one such event, Angel’s Night, Dr. Patel and other volunteers patrolled city streets the night before Halloween, on high alert for acts of violence and vandalism. His participation in this Detroit tradition and other community events has been key to gaining patient trust and buy-in for his pharmacy and immunization services.
Pharmacy Team Member
Past Recipients
2015: Louis Jimenez III
2014: Marianne Reed
2013: Debbie Isakson
2012: Michelina Gleason
Pharmacy Team Member

National Winner

Kathie Smith, CPhT
Alton, Illinois

*Kathie Smith* is Lead Pharmacy Technician at a CVS pharmacy in Alton, Illinois. Practicing at the same pharmacy for 35 years, she’s known some patients for half their lives or more. When they get sick, it’s personal for her. That’s why Smith is persistent when it comes to keeping patients up to date on their vaccines. She addresses vaccines—including flu, pneumonia, and shingles—with every patient who presents at the pharmacy counter. She asks them whether they’ve had the appropriate immunizations for their age, health status, and the time of year. Smith encourages older patients who are nearing Medicare eligibility to get their shingles vaccine while still on their commercial health insurance plan in order to save money. She checks patients’ insurance to advise them of any out-of-pocket expenses they might not expect. When patients say they’ll come back for the shot later, Smith doesn’t stop there. Regardless of a busy pharmacy workflow, Smith attempts to persuade patients to stay and get the vaccine right then. The pharmacy administers approximately 1,000 vaccines per year, and Smith is a driving force behind those efforts.
Examples of Immunization Activities From the

• Fostered relationships with employer groups, vaccine manufacturers, local universities and within the communities they serve to increase immunization rates and to improve education among patients and pharmacy team members alike.

• Collaborating with employer groups such as Pittsburgh Business Group on Health, reached multiple large employers with the same message: a passion for immunization and a complete immunization package of on-site clinics performed by Clinical Coordinator Pharmacists with a voucher program supported by Pharmacists in local stores.

• Lunch and Learn sessions, provided by pharmacists, educated employees on common adult immunizations and led to an increase in immunization rates with the employer.

• Community outreach included on-site clinics within multiple school districts, police departments, and senior centers. A creative marketing incentive for receiving the flu shot, both during on-site clinics or in-store, helped to drive vaccination rates.

• A new collaboration with our protocol physicians expanded the pharmacist’s ability to immunize pediatric patients in the communities.

• She has supported the immunization neighborhood by not only administering the common vaccines, but also the more unique immunizations (ie. rabies).

• By promoting accessibility, increasing employee vaccination rates, and communicating and collaborating with the Occupational Health Department, the pharmacist and her team did their parts to promote the health and continued success of the institution.

• All vaccines were entered into the state’s Immunization registry. Doing so supports the continuum of care, making vaccine information available to patients’ physicians.

• As part of the immunization workflow patients are identified during comprehensive medication reviews or at point of sale for a pharmacist to consult with them about vaccine needs. Based on a patient’s medication profile, for instance, those who are actively taking medications for COPD or asthma will be assessed for pneumococcal vaccine. Patients are then screened using the Immunization Registry. If vaccine status for that patient has not been registered, pharmacy staff communicate directly with the primary care provider to determine if vaccines have already been administered. If not, this allows the pharmacy to administer the missing vaccine to the patient with minimal wait.

• One of the greatest challenges in providing immunizations is reaching out to home bound patients. Because the pharmacy serves primarily rural communities, many of its customers have transportation limitations or physical challenges in traveling the distance to a provider’s office or a pharmacy in town. Pharmacists frequently provide in-home vaccinations in addition to blood pressure checks and full medication reviews for those patients who cannot get to the pharmacy.
More Than 50 Award Nominations Received

- The pharmacists of the immunization clinic have partnered with the physicians of the bone marrow transplant program to provide vaccinations to patients who have undergone bone marrow transplantation. This subset of patients lose all previous immunity when their transplants are completed and require a comprehensive revaccination schedule. This service is convenient for the patients, as the immunization clinic is physically located in the same building as the hematology department, and visit times are coordinated to prevent excessive travel.

- We are working with the obstetrics and gynecology service at the hospital to provide vaccinations to family members of new and expectant mothers including but not limited to influenza, tetanus, pneumococcal, and varicella zoster.

- Our pharmacy has done a terrific job of looking at a patient’s vaccination history using the state IIS website. When a patient over 60 would fill a prescription, we would check their vaccination history for a shingles vaccination and run a test claim to show what their out of pocket cost would be. This was a great opportunity to educate the patient on the risks and dangers of shingles and why they should receive that vaccination. I was overwhelmed by how a strong recommendation from the pharmacist really positively impacted their decision to receive that vaccination over simply placing a brochure in their bag.

- There has been a shift in the attitude of the entire community as the pharmacy is becoming the vaccination destination. We are seeing more and more physicians sending their patients to us for their vaccinations. This reassures the patients that it really is “okay” to go elsewhere than the doctor’s office for a vaccine. This frees up doctors, and they are happy someone else in the healthcare chain picking up this responsibility.

- Sent out numerous notices as well as made many phone calls and faxes to our local providers and nurses indicating what vaccines we offered.

- The pharmacist and his team have built relationships with local church groups and senior centers. As an example, the pharmacist gave a presentation to a local senior group on the differences and benefits of Prevnar13 and Pneumovax23. The talk was so well received that a few of the audience members beat the pharmacist back to the pharmacy to get their vaccination.

- In the fall of 2015, a new threat to the health of the University of Iowa community was on the horizon. The Iowa Department of Public health confirmed over 100 cases of mumps at University of Iowa and promptly recommended that students receive a third dose of the mumps vaccine. Because of the established partnerships, student pharmacists from the College of Pharmacy were able to answer the call and begin vaccinating students across campus to fight the spread of mumps. Over four days, student pharmacists assisted with immunizations clinics for students and provided over 500 Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) vaccines to their fellow students.
Thank you to the more than 280,000 trained pharmacists who are improving the public health of their communities.