



American Pharmacists Association
Improving medication use. Advancing patient care.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CHAIN DRUG STORES



To State Pharmacy Association Executives, State and Territorial Health Officials, and Pharmacy Providers:

As the face of neighborhood healthcare, pharmacies and pharmacists offer convenient and accessible patient-centered services every day and during public health emergencies. In an influenza pandemic, pharmacies will play a critical role in increasing access to pandemic vaccines. Enhanced pre-pandemic coordination between pharmacies and public health programs, particularly in planning for expanding public access and improving timeliness of pandemic vaccine delivery, can significantly improve overall community response efforts during an influenza pandemic.

In the event of an influenza pandemic, state and territorial health agencies would receive an allocation of pandemic influenza vaccine from the Federal government based on their population density. These state and territorial health agencies would be responsible for managing vaccine orders and distribution within their jurisdictions. To ensure that pharmacies are fully included early in pandemic vaccine response efforts, specific agreements between state/territorial health agencies and pharmacies on the logistics of pandemic influenza vaccine planning and response activities within each state/territory are recommended.

Since 2013, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have worked to identify best practices for increasing coordination between public health and pharmacies in preparation for a pandemic vaccine response program. As part of this work, a modifiable [template memorandum of understanding](http://www.pharmacist.com/sites/default/files/MOU%20generic%20State%20Pharmacy%20FINAL%2010%205%202015%200%283%29.pdf) (MOU, <http://www.pharmacist.com/sites/default/files/MOU%20generic%20State%20Pharmacy%20FINAL%2010%205%202015%200%283%29.pdf>), using input from public health agencies and pharmacy stakeholders, was developed to formalize the specific responsibilities between state-level public health programs and pharmacies for pandemic vaccination planning and response activities.

ASTHO, CDC, National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations (NASPA), the American Pharmacists Association (APhA), and the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) have been working together on this initiative. In March 2016, APhA held a session during its Annual Meeting in Baltimore, MD, with state pharmacy association executives to inform and facilitate discussion regarding the template MOU. Then, in June 2016, NACDS held a meeting at its office in Arlington, VA to discuss strategies to improve public-private partnerships, which would lead to earlier and more broadly available pandemic vaccine. The reports from both meetings are attached to this letter. **After you have an opportunity to review this template MOU and the reports, we encourage public health agencies and pharmacies to engage in a dialogue regarding implementation of this MOU.** Currently, the template MOU between public health and pharmacies is being piloted in selected states. This pilot will provide critical information about the process, timeline, and necessary tools to assist with implementing the template MOU. A resource toolkit containing best practices and lessons learned from the pilot will be shared with other state/territorial health agencies and pharmacies to provide guidance for successfully executing the MOU. The organizations signed onto this letter support this initiative and its potential impact on public health, and serve as a resource for you.

This template MOU provides an opportunity for public and private sector healthcare partners to build upon existing infrastructure at the federal, state, and local levels to improve community resilience and public health response. We encourage your continued, active engagement between state and local health

departments in collaborating with state pharmacy associations, boards of pharmacy, and community-based pharmacies, to collaborate around key public health initiatives, including vaccination.

Best regards,



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PS: The attached documents can also be found at: <http://www.pharmacist.com/pharmacy-and-public-health-collaboration>