



PROMOTION

APHA-ASP Operation Immunization

Guide to Promotional Activities

The heart of this kit contains ideas that can be used during American Pharmacists Month and throughout the year to promote the need to immunize adults and children. It is designed to help encourage, organize and coordinate Operation Immunization promotional efforts. Information on publicity and promotion includes how to reach media through print, radio, and television. Many of the techniques discussed here can be applied when trying to promote pharmacy services, especially those that involve Medication Therapy Management like patient counseling sessions that could be included in immunization events.

The guide includes a news article for newsletters, magazines and journals; a news release for the press; a letter to the editor; and a media advisory which can be tailored to fit your individual needs. It also contains a large section of resources for obtaining additional materials and a list of groups that can help you organize and promote Operation Immunization activities. Enlisting their help now can lead to the formation of a solid network for future efforts.

Promotional Materials

Camera-Ready Fact Sheets:

You can use the information in these fact sheets in press releases and articles, or reproduce them for handouts. You may wish to customize a local fact sheet on the adult immunization problem in your local community. Don't reinvent the wheel. Several fact sheets on immunizations have been provided by the National Coalition for Adult Immunization (NCAI) and the Immunization Action Coalition, are included in the Immunization Resources Section of this manual. In addition, fact sheets on adolescent and childhood immunizations have been added, if you wish to broaden your activities to include this population.

The materials provided in this guide for promotion and distribution to patients can be reproduced for use on the chapter level. However, reproduction of these materials in large quantities can be costly. To reduce costs, an order sheet for materials from the NCAI has been included in the Immunization Resources section of this guide. Many of the materials can be ordered from NCAI for free without the costs of reproduction, so you may want to keep this in mind when choosing which materials to distribute during your campaign. Also, many of the documents for distribution can be found on the web site of the organization responsible for producing the resource.

Camera-Ready Immunization Schedules:

We have included adolescent, childhood, and adult immunization schedules for your campaign. You can distribute these schedules anywhere, especially at clinics or health fairs.

Adult and Child Immunization Record Cards:

This record card should be distributed to patients receiving immunizations. These cards may also be distributed to local medical clinics, public health nurses, and the public. Also, available for use are adult and child immunization record cards made available by your local state health department. There is a list of state health departments included in this manual.

Immunization Information and Operation Immunization Posters:

Hang these in local hospitals, senior citizen homes, medical clinics, pharmacies, grocery stores, and other public

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places to promote the importance of immunizations and where your chapter will be providing immunizations. Be sure to ask permission before posting information in these areas.

Immunization Information Brochure:

The brochure can be used at health fairs, clinics and in hospital waiting rooms.

Immunization Information Bag Stuffer:

Have pharmacists distribute these in prescription bags, or have a doctor or other healthcare provider distribute these when patients leave the provider's offices or health clinics.

Flyer Template/Logo Sheets:

These are promotional materials that can be used in marketing Operation Immunization to the public.

Publicity and Promotion

You can promote Operation Immunization during American Pharmacists Month in a variety of ways. Use your imagination! You might consider any of the following:

- Issue your own press release announcing a community activity or reviewing the problems of vaccine-preventable diseases in your locale. A sample news release is provided in this notebook. Write an opinion-editorial (op-ed) piece for your local newspaper, or send a "Letter to the Editor." A sample is provided.
- Organize a press conference. Arrange for a well-known local figure/official to receive his/her immunization(s), and publicize the event in the media. Have the event take place at a local pharmacy or at a special flu clinic. This attention can lead to increased awareness of immunization activities throughout the community. Once plans have been finalized for the press conference, you should send out what is called a "media advisory" to your local newspapers, radio and TV stations about a week before the date to let reporters, news directors or editors know specific information. A sample media advisory is provided for you. Be sure to print the advisory on your own letterhead.
- Hold a health fair or operate an adult immunization booth at an existing fair. Distribute the enclosed camera ready adolescent and adult immunization schedules at the clinic or health fair. You can also distribute copies of the fact sheets and the immunization information brochure and/or bag stuffer.
- Publicize American Pharmacists Month and Operation Immunization in your campus newsletters, magazines and state pharmacy journals using the sample article and camera-ready ads provided.
- Hang the posters and flyers in local hospitals, medical clinics, senior citizen homes, pharmacies, grocery stores, and other public places.
- Schedule your spokesperson (a key pharmacist in the community who will be the public speaker about immunizations) to appear on a radio or TV talk show. A section on broadcast media is provided.
- Ask public service directors at radio and TV stations to help raise awareness by producing or airing public service announcements (PSAs). Assist them in every way possible. Samples of 15- and 30-second PSAs are enclosed.
- Publicize Operation Immunization in community newsletters, school newspapers, church bulletins, etc.

Know Your Media Contacts

The mass media can be an integral part of your immunization education program: don't be afraid to contact them.

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With the media's help, the message about the importance of immunizations can reach a larger audience. Also keep in mind that the mass media outlets may be interested in doing more than just providing publicity. Many large-scale, community based health programs have been cosponsored by a local newspaper or magazine, radio station or television station.

Most of the activities in this guide involve working with the media. If you don't know any media contacts, begin by scanning newspapers and monitoring radio and TV shows to learn the names of reporters who cover health topics. Also learn the names of public affairs directors of radio and TV stations. Write down their names, phone and FAX numbers on cards that are easily accessible. When you call or visit the people on your media list, ask about deadlines, special interests and informational needs. Add this information to your list.

Whenever you can, arrange to meet face to face with reporters, editors and producers. Bring your article, news release, public service announcements, or any other materials you want them to use. Bring background information if you are asking them to cover an event. Be sure to leave your business card or phone number.

Print Media Guide

Daily newspapers are a good source of publicity, but they are not the only outlets. Other sources that should not be overlooked include weekly newspapers; local or regional magazines; newsletters of Chambers of Commerce, fraternal groups, health maintenance organizations, hospitals and clinics, senior citizens centers, medical organizations; local high school or college publications; church and synagogue bulletins and newsletters; billboards; and public and private transportation.

Print Story Ideas

Consider a variety of approaches and ideas beyond the prepared article you have given to an editor or reporter. Make sure they are notified of local events (i.e., health fairs, immunization clinics) and offer to arrange interviews with members of your group or local experts. Be creative in suggesting story ideas. News items are not the only avenue; feature stories or stories with a business angle are also possibilities.

Some suggested topics include:

- Why adults and children are not being vaccinated.
- The low cost of preventive health care (immunization) vs. the high cost of hospitalization.
- The CDC *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* on cases of vaccine preventable-diseases.
- A science piece on how vaccines are made.
- A story on needless deaths from infectious diseases using celebrities such as Jim Henson (death from complications of Group A streptococcal pneumonia) or some well-known person from your local area.
- Personal stories on the impact of vaccine-preventable diseases.

For print story placement, remember to:

- Determine whether the publication's staff prefers to write stories themselves, or whether they will accept your copy. Offer your article to the publication. It can be used as background if the staff wants to write the press article. Put the reporters in contact with experts who can give them additional information.
- Send a query letter with specific story ideas for a particular media outlet. This is something reporters and editors can use to follow up possible story ideas.
- Send a news or press release when making a specific announcement (e.g., new time and location of an after-hours clinic, an outbreak of influenza in the community). It should have a strong lead paragraph

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containing the important information such as who, what, when, where, and why. Limit the release to two double-spaced pages.

- For specific events such as an immunization clinic or a news conference, send a media advisory inviting both print and broadcast media to cover it.
- Always follow up by a phone call a couple of days after sending a query letter, news release or media advisory. Ask the reporter or editors if they received the material or have any questions, and thank them for their time.
- As stated under “Know Your Media Contacts,” find out which reporter is likely to cover immunization issues (usually it’s the health reporter). Call and attempt to speak to him/her personally. BEWARE of contacting a reporter who is on deadline (usually in the late afternoon for a daily paper and Monday afternoon for a weekly paper published on Thursday); he/she will not be receptive.
- Provide the reporter with a press briefing packet giving background on your organization and the subject matter. Starting with a simple pocket folder (with your organization’s logo or a state seal affixed to it, if possible) the packet could include the following:
 - letter of introduction listing the materials included in the packet
 - the enclosed fact sheets on each vaccine-preventable disease as well as the general adult immunization question and answer sheet and fact sheets on adolescent, childhood, and adult immunization (you may wish to develop a local fact sheet on the immunization problem in your local community)
 - adolescent, childhood, and adult immunization schedules
 - source list containing the names and phone numbers of people who are willing to talk with reporters about the story being promoted
 - calendar of upcoming events
 - business card(s) of media relations coordinator or spokesperson in your chapter
 - past informative articles or editorials a reporter could use for background information
 - brochures and flyers
 - charts or graphs of immunization rates in your state
 - logo of sponsoring organization and Operation Immunization for possible inclusion with an article
- Identify local pharmacists and experts for the reporter to interview, and provide their names and phone numbers. These spokespersons must be knowledgeable, able to stay focused on the message, and be available for media phone calls. It is helpful to have a range of people on this source list; for example, a high-ranking public health department official, a health care provider, a supportive elected official. Make sure that you have spoken with these contacts and mentioned the tight deadlines and time constraints of reporters. Phone calls must be taken when the reporter calls, or the contact must respond to the reporter as soon as possible. If they can’t work in this time frame, find another contact for the media.
- Develop a question and answer document for your spokespeople that anticipates the questions a reporter may ask and suggested responses. This will enable those taking calls to be better prepared to handle media inquiries. (This is an internal document that should not be distributed to reporters.)
- Be aware of information presented to reporters. Everything said is “on the record” and can be quoted.
- Make yourself or the organization’s designated media relations coordinator available as a point of contact. Respond to inquiries and informational requests from reporters as quickly as possible. Do not wait to return calls; reporters have to meet deadlines. If deadlines are missed, the intended message will not be included in stories.
- Be sure to call and thank the reporter after an article is written. A thank you note would also be appropriate. This will put the organization’s name in front of them one additional time and re-emphasize the issue.
- Maintain contact with editors and reporter but only when the issue is newsworthy, local and important to report. Do not “wear out your welcome.”
- A picture is worth a thousand words! Photographs with lively captions often have a good chance of being

used. Topics that might sound uninteresting to an editor literally take on life when accompanied by a photo. Photos make great follow-up releases, too. Use a short caption identifying the activity and people pictured.

Tips for Assuring a Successful Operation Immunization Campaign

To ensure the success of Operation Immunization it is imperative that communications between all participating organizations and individuals are open and complete. Below are tips on how to form partnerships with professional organizations, pharmacies, interdisciplinary organizations, health departments, etc.

Forming Partnerships with Professional Organizations

1. In the beginning of this campaign a meeting should be held with chapter officers and advisors of the APhA-ASP chapter to discuss the plan and implementation of Operation Immunization.
2. Take time to meet with the dean of your school or college of pharmacy and explain Operation Immunization to gain his or her support of this campaign.
3. An Operation Immunization committee will need to be formed with co-chairs, from APhA-ASP and any other participating organization. Try to form an interdisciplinary partnership with nursing or medical students, or partner with another pharmacy organization on your campus.
4. Contact your local or state pharmaceutical association to ask for their support. Your state pharmacy association will also receive an Operation Immunization planning guide and promotional materials.

Forming Partnerships with Interdisciplinary Organizations and Health Departments

1. If pharmacists cannot legally administer vaccines in your state, partnerships with local nursing or medical schools and public health departments can aide in advancing your campaign.
2. Enclosed in this manual is the contact information for the health departments in each state. If you are in a state, where pharmacists cannot administer vaccines, a public health department would be a great resource for immunization services. State health departments can provide you with contacts for nurses that will immunize in pharmacies and dates that the health department administers immunizations.
3. You may want to contact your local state health department for additional adult and child immunization record cards, as a collaborative effort. Operation Immunization is a great way to get involved with the other health care professionals in your community. By working together, thousands of people can be immunized and educated about the importance of immunization, which is the goal of this public health care initiative.

Forming Partnerships with Pharmacies

The Operation Immunization Committee will need to start contacting local pharmacies to identify sites that can provide immunization services for the campaign.

1. Contact local pharmacies to make arrangements for a meeting where you can explain Operation Immunization and the benefits that this campaign will have for their pharmacy.
2. If the pharmacy agrees to participate in Operation Immunization, designate a specific person on the committee to be a contact person for that pharmacy. This person has an important role to ensure there is continuous

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communication between the pharmacy and the committee. This component will ensure a successful campaign.

3. In states where a pharmacist can not administer immunizations or are not trained to do so, contact a school of nursing or the state or local health department and see if arrangements can be made to have nurses or nursing students administer vaccines at a local pharmacy.

How to Get Publicity

What Is News?

Reporters and editors are concerned with informing their public of events and issues that affect their media outlets target audiences. For something to have news value, it must, in the eyes of the news media, have impact on the general community. If it is important to the public, it is important to the media.

The essential elements of news value are timeliness, local appeal, and interesting subject matter. Ask yourself these questions about your subject matter:

- What is the significance of your pharmacy's services or special events to the general public?
- When health news breaks, is there an angle related to your pharmacy or to the profession in general? Are you an expert in that area? (For example, if new research on asthma treatment is publicized, does your pharmacy specialize in counseling or providing additional services for the asthmatic patient?)
- How does your expertise, special event, or unique service help the community?
- Are trends in society reflected in your pharmacy? (For example, has your pharmacy started providing a new level of pharmaceutical care, such as immunizations or hyperlipidemia monitoring?)

There are several kinds of coverage: **News**—usually noting conflict or change; **Features**—usually stories of human interest or news that is not time limited; **Editorials**—usually coverage by the media that takes a stand on an issue of relevance to the general public or to a particular constituency; and **Op-Eds**—also opinion oriented, but generated by people not associated with the media.

Where Do I Begin?

Pharmacists play a role in the delivery of health care to almost every American. Even though health care is one of the hottest topics covered by the media these days, pharmacy does not always factor into the media's coverage. Reporters and editors are constantly covering the pharmaceutical industry and physicians, but many times overlook the contributions of the pharmacist, who is an integral part of the health care system. In the minds of some reporters and consumers, the pharmacist is secondary to the medications—simply a dispenser.

Every pharmacist has a big job to do to change that perception. Americans take for granted the services provided by the pharmacist because they have always received the advice and care of their pharmacist without an appointment or a bill, unlike the care provided by a physician. The media can be an important player in establishing the expertise of the pharmacist, but only when a pharmacy is offering the level of service and quality care that makes a difference in their patients' health care.

Get started by reading the publications that you would like to cover your issues, by watching and listening to news broadcasts, and by becoming familiar with the reporters covering health care. After doing this, you will easily be able to develop a list of media targets. Cut the job down to your size. If you have only one day a month to work on your public relations program, you need to set your sights for a small-scale result. If your stories are local, concentrate only on local media. If your story warrants regional or national coverage, be prepared to give your campaign quite a bit more time.

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How Do I Develop a Media List?

If you are concentrating your public relations program in a small local area, you should be able to develop a media list by calling the newspapers, television, and radio stations in the community and inquiring about the reporters who cover the health “beat.”

If you are initiating a regional or national media campaign, you should consult a media directory. One easy way to decide which directory is right for you is to look at the ones available in your local library. Sometimes local organizations, the chamber of commerce, or the convention bureau have developed a media directory. You can find out if your area has one by calling a local public relations firm and asking them to recommend one.

Whether you order a national directory or use a local one, you will have to check all contact names before sending information or making a call to pitch a story. Editors and reporters change “beats” frequently, and a news release sent to the wrong reporter usually ends up in the trash. Simply call the media outlet and ask who is covering your issue area. For pharmacy, the typical issue area is health, but your issue could apply to the metro or business sections.

Remember that there are many more news outlets at your disposal than you might think. Do not overlook these important sources:

- Television stations have local news programs, editorial opinions and “talk back” opportunities, public affairs programs, one-on-one interview shows, and public affairs “specials.”
- Community cable stations can offer local news programming, community access channels, and public affairs programming.
- Public television stations provide local news programming as well as a diverse mix of locally produced public affairs programming.
- Radio formats include all-news stations, radio talk shows, public affairs programming, and editorial comment.
- Newspapers have numerous “beat” reporters covering specialized issues for the main news section, editorial page editors, op-ed opinion pieces, letters to the editor, the business section, consumer reporters, and “style” sections offering soft news.

Basic Media Tools

News Releases

A news release is an up-to-the-minute summary of the importance of your news. Include who, what, when, and details of why and how. A news release is used to announce news, e.g., a major new community health project or a special event—and can be distributed with a media kit of background materials. Often when your news is not pressing or significant enough to warrant a news conference or media briefing, you should still send out a news release.

Keep in mind, however, that the newsrooms of America are inundated with news releases. The average editor may receive several hundred news releases in a typical week. Although no precise data have been collected, general opinion and observation indicate that only 10 to 20 percent of news releases submitted to the media are used in some way. If the news release is to survive as a conveyer of information, it must be issued with discretion—only if the information is really news. Your news release must be written as skillfully as possible and directed to the appropriate person.

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Guidelines for preparing a news release:

- News releases should be typed on one side of a standard 8 1/2 x 11-inch letterhead. Double spacing is advised.
- Make your release easy to read. Use black ink and standard typefaces.
- Leave ample margins and leave sufficient space at the top and bottom for editors to make notes.
- At the top right side of the first page, supply the name and phone number of the contact person who can offer more detailed information.
- Use a headline (in bold typeface) to summarize the story and grab the attention of the editor.
- Identify the city and date of origin of your release at the beginning of the release in caps: e.g., WASHINGTON, DC.
- Releases should be only one page, if possible. For a longer release, place **-more-** at the bottom center of each page.
- At the top of continuing pages, write, for example, **Page 2 – Operation Immunization**
- To end the release, use the symbols **###** centered at the bottom of the page.
- Write in a succinct and straightforward manner. Avoid slang, jargon, or superlatives. Let the story speak for itself.
- Use quotations when they are relevant to the story.
- Be accurate. Attribute all sources. Spell all names correctly.

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

PSAs are brief messages that provide helpful information to the public, solicit support for a particular cause, and/or offer an organization's free services. Unlike paid advertising, PSAs are carried free of charge by publications, radio, and television stations in an effort to educate an audience and to encourage people to do something such as participate, call, write, or contribute.

Included are print PSAs which you can send to your local newspapers or magazines. Also included are radio PSAs which can be sent to your local radio stations. Before attempting to place a PSA, determine whom you want to reach with your message. Then identify the publications and radio stations in your area that service that particular audience. Once you have determined the media outlets you want to target, contact the head of their community development or public service department to find out the proper procedures for submitting PSAs.

Media Advisory (or Media Alert)

A media advisory/alert is useful to draw the attention of the media to an event that you want them to attend. It usually begins with a simple who, what, when, where format, with details of how and why in the body of the advisory. Media advisories can be used very effectively in combination with news releases and/or pitch letters. A media advisory is often sent or faxed to the media the day before or the day of an event.

If you are holding an event that you would like the media to attend, do not provide all the details, such as through a news release, prior to the event. A media advisory should provide enough information to entice reporters to your event—in conjunction with a telephone call. Provide the news release on-site, possibly as part of a media kit, with enough details to help them write the story.

Guidelines for Placing Op-Eds

Many newspapers provide a forum for opinions opposite the editorial page ("Op-Ed") that addresses issues of concern to your community. Pitch letters can be effective tools to propose an op-ed column to a publication.

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When your local pharmacy association is involved and has a point to make on a major, newsworthy issue (such as trends in health care), the op-ed page provides you with the chance to illustrate the value of the profession. Papers will occasionally publish a philosophical piece that may comment on a continuing problem, such as medication misuse or an observation on society.

Send your pitch letter first to a handful of editors with the op-ed outline and then follow-up with a call. In a pitch letter, you should indicate the subject matter and proposed author. Although you could simply send out the op-ed piece to all the editors on your media list with a pitch letter, it is better to approach them first so you can tailor the piece to a specific publication's needs.

Here are five general steps to follow when preparing an op-ed:

1. *Find opportunities.* Review all publications in your region to determine which accept op-eds and which formats are preferred. Are they generally about current social issues? Are they in a pro/con format?
2. *Decide on a topic.* In general, try to relate your topic to a current issue. Samples include the role of the pharmacist in the health care system and the reasons why pharmacy services have to be an important part of the health care agenda.
3. *Approach editors.* Send a pitch letter to appropriate editors outlining the proposed topic and author. If you have established a relationship with a particular editor, make a call instead of writing. Keep in mind that the person whose name appears on the op-ed need not be the person who wrote it. The byline should be that of a person prominent in your association, community, or with a recognized expertise or specialty.
4. *Prepare a draft.* Op-eds require a good deal of work to make a comment or to state a view on a current issue convincingly and should not be undertaken unless there is some indication that there is interest. With a positive or encouraging reply, it then can be worthwhile to undertake and submit a draft op-ed. The average op-ed should run about 750 words (approximately three double-spaced, typed pages), and the byline should include the author's current professional position. In addition, be certain to identify the author as a pharmacist, if appropriate.
5. *Submit a draft.* Adhere to deadlines. If you promise an editor you will have a draft by a certain date, do so. Remember, an interest in reviewing an op-ed does not necessarily mean the publication will use the piece, even if it is particularly well written. You may have to adapt the op-ed to the editor's wishes or to provide back up for points you make in the piece. If the editor ultimately declines the piece, try reworking it and begin the entire process again. Persistence is the key. Keep in mind that some large newspapers may ask that an op-ed piece be on an exclusive basis, meaning no other publication can simultaneously print the piece. Smaller papers generally accept multiple submissions, as long as competing papers in the same city do not run the same pieces. Check each publication's particular policy.

Media Pitch Letters

A pitch letter is used to introduce you to an editor or producer and to suggest story ideas or op-eds for publication. A pitch letter can be used instead of a news release and may suggest more than one story idea to a reporter for consideration.

Media Kits

Media kits are important tools when dealing with the media. If compiled correctly, they can be used to package an issue—complete with accompanying graphics, sidebars, and other background materials. They are essential at a news conference or special event. Media kits are also easy and inexpensive to prepare. Include items in the kit that reinforce your story, such as other news clips about the project, photos, pertinent news releases, fact sheets (with statistics on the implications of medication misuse, for example), brochures, and documented statistics.

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Place these items in a folder with pockets. These folders should identify your local association, pharmacy, hospital, or business. You can choose to have folders printed or to use stickers with your name and logo. Include your business card.

Broadcast Media Guide: Pitching your Spokesperson to Radio/TV Talk Shows

Arrange a radio or television interview using the following steps:

- Make your “pitch” in writing at least one month before you would like the interview to air. Identify radio and television talk show producers or the person responsible for booking a show’s guests. Call to follow up.
- Be prepared to “sell” your program idea. Choose an interesting angle—why would your spokesperson interest listeners or viewers? Describe him/her as someone with an absorbing message to tell. Give an indication of his/her availability.
- Develop a media briefing packet, including a brief biography of the spokesperson, suggestions for “on-the-air” questions, a list of relevant upcoming events, the general adult immunization question and answer sheet and fact sheet and any other relevant information. Send the packet to the contact person with a cover letter indicating that you will be calling to confirm an interview time and date. You may want to consider identifying a pharmacist participating in the project to be on the show with a student spokesperson(s).
- Make a follow-up phone call to arrange a booking.
- Once the booking is confirmed, inform the spokesperson of the details of the engagement: date, time, location, contact person, host of the show, and correct attire (i.e.; white coat standing in clinic, dark business suit or dress, contemporary tie). Give him/her a copy of the media briefing packet and work to familiarize him/her with the proposed questions. Brief him/her on American Pharmacists Month, Operation Immunization and adult immunizations at least twice. Also brief him/her on local activities.
- After the interview is aired, send thank you notes to station personnel. Leave the lines of communication open for future opportunities.

Sample News Release

Customize and retype this sample release on your organization's letterhead. Double space the copy and type on only one side of the letterhead. Try to keep it to one page only, but no longer than two pages. "-30-" means end of the new release. Make sure your facts and statistics are up to date.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Date of Release)

Contact: (Your contact person)
(Your phone number)

(ACTIVITY) PLANNED FOR (DATE)

NAME OF STATE/CITY, Date—(Who, your organization) will conduct a (what, community immunization clinic, health fair, news conference, etc.) on (day, date, time) at (where) as part of a national effort to increase the number of adults and children vaccinated against preventable diseases. In conjunction with American Pharmacists Month October 2008, the American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP) is conducting Operation Immunization. Operation Immunization is an immunization awareness campaign designed to increase the public's knowledge of immunizations while increasing the number of adults receiving immunizations.

(Give a brief description of the chapter event, including any prominent spokesperson who will be available for interviews and/or immunizations). "(Name of Activity) is to increase our community's (or name of community) awareness of the need to vaccinate our adult population just as much as our children," says (spokesperson). "Each year in the United States, as many as 50,000 to 70,000 adults die needlessly from vaccine-preventable disease or their complications."

Immunizations are readily available for such common adult illnesses as influenza (flu), pneumococcal disease and hepatitis B. Vaccinations against measles, mumps, rubella (German measles), hepatitis A, tetanus, diphtheria, and chicken pox (varicella) are also needed by children and some adults.

In (state/city/county, obtain Medicare flu vaccinations rates for your area from the regional flu coordinators at the Health Care Financing Administration). We must push this number even higher and take proper care of our loved ones," says (spokesperson).

"Vaccines have been proven to be safe and effective and provide the best protection against infectious disease," (he/she) continued. "Of utmost importance is the fact that the benefits of vaccinations far outweigh the risks and problems associated with natural infections and your pharmacist can play an important role in providing you information about vaccine-preventable illnesses"

For more information about the (name of activity) or immunizations, call (phone number).

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Sample Media Advisory

Your Coverage Is Invited

Contact: (Name)
(Date-1 week before event)
(Phone Number)

ADULT IMMUNIZATION ALERT

-(Your Organization) Kicks Off American Pharmacists Month with Operation Immunization
or
-(Your Organization) Sponsors Operation Immunization-

WHAT: (Describe the activity, whether it is a news conference or immunization service at a local pharmacy) to:

1. support efforts to increase the number of adults and children being immunized against vaccine-preventable disease, especially during National Pharmacists Month;
2. urge all adults—especially high-risk groups—to update their immunizations, particularly for influenza, pneumococcal disease and hepatitis B;
3. immunize those adults in need
4. urge all adults to update their child's immunizations, to make sure they are up-to-date on vaccines

WHO:

- (Name of local spokesperson and his/her affiliation)
- Invited local celebrity (to be announced) who will urge people of all ages to be vaccinated (and may receive an immunization)

WHEN: (day, date, time)

WHERE: (Location)

WHY:

- An estimated 10 percent to 20 percent of the United States population contracts influenza annually.
- As many as 55,000 to 80,000 adult Americans die needlessly from vaccine-preventable diseases (VPD) or their complications. Influenza and pneumococcal pneumonia together are the sixth leading cause of death in the United States.
- Today in the U.S. at least 100 times as many adults as children die each year from VPDs.
- The annual direct medical costs of treating influenza are estimated at up to \$4.6 billion. Severe epidemics cost at least \$12 billion annually.
- Only 67% of the nation's children are fully immunized by the age of two.

Sample Letter to the Editor

A letter to the editor, which is less than 300 words, is signed by an individual from the community who usually represents an organization. A letter is normally written in response to an event or article in the newspaper in which it will appear. It should express an opinion, clarify a point or emphasize a message. Send it to the editorial page editor or editor-in-chief. Sometimes TV, cable and public access stations present editorials on important local issues. Send your letter to their editorial writer or general manager. “-30-” means end of letter.

The public and many health care providers may not realize that more Americans die of influenza and pneumococcal disease than from breast cancer and AIDS combined, each year. They may not know that hepatitis B virus is 100 times more infectious than the virus that causes AIDS, or that the hepatitis B virus infects 100,000-140,000 Americans annually.

Immunizations are readily available for such common adult illnesses as influenza (flu), pneumococcal disease and hepatitis

B. Vaccinations against measles, mumps, rubella (German measles), hepatitis A, tetanus, diphtheria, and chickenpox (varicella) are also needed by children and some adults.

During American Pharmacists Month, October 2008, (who, your organization) will conduct a (what, community immunization clinic, health fair, news conference, etc.) as part of an effort to increase the number of adults and children vaccinated against preventable diseases. The (name of activity) is to increase our community's (or name of community) awareness of the need to vaccinate our adult population just as much as our children. Each year in the United States, as many as 55,000 to 80,000 adults die needlessly from vaccine-preventable diseases or their complications.

Vaccines have been proven to be safe and effective and provide the best protection against infectious disease. Of utmost importance is the fact that the benefits of vaccinations far outweigh the risks and problems associated with natural infections.

Money can be saved, the quality of life improved and the mortality rate from these diseases lowered by a simple approach to medicine—immunizations. Support Operation Immunization: *Student Pharmacists and Practitioners Protecting the Public Health.*

Sample Radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

People love the radio. They have it on at home, in their cars and when they are exercising. Public service announcements (PSAs) are one means of directly reaching the public with information on adult immunizations. Below are some samples of PSAs, but use your imagination and write your own targeted directly to your audience. Don't forget the classical radio stations, college radio and talk radio stations. Also send them to your local TV stations; they may use them during a public service program.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Date of Release)

CONTACT: (Your contact person)

(Your phone number)

RUN DATE: (From date to date)

15-Second Spots

1. From September to December is the best time each year for adults to get vaccinated against the flu. Call your doctor, pharmacist or clinic today.
2. There are 3.9 million cases of chicken pox in the U.S. each year, with most occurring between the ages of 6–10. Get your children vaccinated today.
3. Adolescents are among three groups at special risk for contracting measles, along with college students and health care workers. Get vaccinated today.
4. Hepatitis B virus is 100 times more infectious than the virus that causes AIDS, and complications of Hepatitis B kill 3,000 to 4,000 Americans annually. Get vaccinated today.

30-Second Spots

1. The flu is a major killer of persons aged 65 years and older, particularly those who are frail or have heart or lung conditions. An estimated 20,000 Americans die each year from flu-related illness. Yet there is a vaccine which can prevent it, and Medicare will pay for those who are eligible. Don't let your parents or grandparents become a statistic. Have them call their pharmacist or other healthcare provider today.
2. Most people believe that when they hear about a measles outbreak, it involves only children. Yet many outbreaks today occur in young adults, especially those on college campuses. College students are at special risk because many live in close quarters which increase the chances for spreading the highly contagious virus. If you were born after 1956, you may need a second dose of measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine. Call your doctor, pharmacist or clinic today.
3. Did you know that more Americans die of flu and pneumococcal disease than either breast cancer or AIDS each year, or that the hepatitis B virus is 100 times more infectious than the virus that causes AIDS? Shots are available for these common adult illnesses. Some adults may need to be immunized against measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis A, tetanus, diphtheria, and chickenpox. Call your doctor, pharmacist or clinic today.

Sample Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Date of Release)

RUN DATE: (From date to date)

CONTACT: (Your contact person)

(Your phone number)

15-Second Spots

1. College students between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four and living in dormitories are at the highest risk of developing bacterial meningitis, a potentially life-threatening infection. If you are at high risk, consider being immunized today.

2. Bacterial meningitis is a potentially life-threatening infection that is preventable by immunization. Talk to your pharmacist or other health care provider today about receiving the meningococcal vaccine or additional information.

30-Second Spots

1. Bacterial meningitis is a potentially life-threatening infection that is preventable by immunization. College students between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four who are living in residence halls have the highest risk. The American College Health Association (ACHA) recommends that all college students should consider vaccination to reduce their risk of bacterial meningitis. Talk to your pharmacist or other healthcare provider today if you are at high risk for bacterial meningitis and wish to consider vaccination or receive more information.

2. Bacterial meningitis is a potentially life-threatening infection that is preventable by immunization. College students between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four who are living in residence halls have the highest risk. Immunization may be considered by:

- Students entering college who wish to reduce their risk of developing bacterial meningitis and are not pregnant.
- Students whose immunity is compromised due to a medical condition.
- Students traveling to areas of the world with widespread bacterial meningitis.

Talk to your pharmacist or other healthcare provider today if you are at high risk for bacterial meningitis and wish to consider vaccination or receive more information.

Sample Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Date of Release)

CONTACT: (Your contact person)
(Your phone number)

RUN DATE: (From date to date)

15-Second Spots

1. Pneumonia and influenza together are the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S., and the fifth-leading cause among older adults. Both of these infections can be prevented by vaccination. Get vaccinated today!
2. Each year in the United States, pneumococcal disease accounts for an estimated 500,000 cases of pneumonia, 50,000 cases of a blood stream infection, and 3,000 cases of meningitis. Don't become a statistic – get vaccinated!
3. Pneumococcal pneumonia accounts for up to 25% to 35% of all adult pneumonias leading to hospitalization, and it is the most common cause of pneumonia. Get vaccinated today!
4. Pneumococcal disease is to blame for up to 40,000 deaths each year in the United States. Approximately 50% of these deaths can be prevented through use of the pneumococcal vaccine. Ask your health care provider about vaccination today.
5. A single dose of pneumococcal vaccine is recommended for most people age sixty-five or older. Some people who were younger than sixty-five when they received the pneumococcal vaccine may need one booster dose after five years.

30-Second Spots

1. Pneumococcal disease is an infection that causes the most common kind of bacterial pneumonia, and this infection can spread into the bloodstream and be potentially fatal. Pneumococcal disease can be prevented with a safe, effective vaccine. People age sixty-five or older, people with chronic illnesses such as heart or lung disease, and people with a weakened immune system should be vaccinated. Estimates find that less than half of older adults and only 10% of adults in high-risk groups have received the vaccine. Don't become a statistic!

Sample Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Date of Release)

CONTACT: (Your contact person)
(Your phone number)

RUN DATE: (From date to date)

15-Second Spots

1. Influenza can be prevented with a safe, effective vaccine. You cannot get influenza from the vaccine.
2. An average of 200,000 hospitalizations and 36,000 deaths occur each year in America related to influenza. These numbers rise to 300,000 hospitalizations and 40,000 deaths during severe flu seasons. Be sure to get vaccinated each fall.
3. The influenza vaccine can prevent up to 50% to 60% of hospitalizations and 90% of deaths from influenza-related complications in the elderly.
4. Influenza can worsen chronic heart disease, lung disease and diabetes, and can lead to bacterial or viral pneumonia. It can also lead to hospitalization and death, especially among the elderly. Make sure to get vaccinated this fall.
5. The influenza virus changes each year, so it is necessary to receive an annual influenza shot each fall.
6. The peak of flu season occurs each year in the United States from late December to early March. Get your flu shot each fall to protect yourself against influenza.
7. If you are a person in regular contact with individuals at high risk of complications from influenza, you should consider an annual flu shot. Health care workers, employees of nursing homes or assisted living communities, caregivers, and household members of high-risk individuals should all be vaccinated against the flu each fall.

30-Second Spots

If you are included in one of the following groups, you need to receive a flu shot each year:

- People age 50 years or older
- Residents of nursing homes
- Adults and children who have chronic illnesses such as heart or lung disease, and especially if the illness required medical attention or hospitalization during the previous year
- Children and teenagers receiving long-term aspirin therapy
- Women who will be in the second or third trimester of pregnancy during the flu season

Sample Media Pitch Letter

Date

Name of journalist
Name of publication
Street address
City, State, Zip code

Dear Mr./Ms. [Last name]:

With the growing concern throughout the country with health care, I am writing for your help in publicizing several events that will benefit your readers'/viewers' health. The [School name] chapter of the American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP) is participating in a campaign called Operation Immunization: *Student Pharmacists and Practitioners Protecting the Public Health*. The project is an immunization awareness campaign designed to increase the public's knowledge about immunizations while increasing the number of adults receiving immunizations.

Each year in the United States, as many as 55,000 to 80,000 adults die needlessly from vaccine-preventable diseases or their complications. For this reason, the [School name] chapter of APhA-ASP is holding a [what, immunization clinic, health fair, etc.] to [why, directly administer immunizations, educate the public about the importance of receiving immunizations, etc.].

The following is a list of the different events of our campaign:

[List dates, times, and places for each event]

I will be following up by telephone soon to see if you are interested in additional information about our Operation Immunization campaign. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me (phone #) if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Name
Title

Sample Solicitation Letter

Dear _____,

On behalf of the APhA-ASP chapter at the University of _____, I would like to take this opportunity to inform you about Operation Immunization: *Student Pharmacists and Practitioners Protecting the Public Health*. In cooperation with the American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP), our school will be launching a campaign to increase immunization awareness among the public and to increase the number of people receiving immunizations.

The goal of Operation Immunization is to increase the public's knowledge of immunizations while increasing the number of adults receiving immunizations. Since the launching of this campaign in 1997, student pharmacists and practitioners have provided over 750,000 immunizations nationwide!

Participants include the 101 APhA-ASP chapters with the help of trained practitioners and other healthcare professionals trained and certified to give immunizations. Pharmacists, in the 46 states allowing pharmacists to immunize patients, are encouraged by APhA-ASP chapters to provide immunization services at their pharmacy. In states where pharmacists are not authorized to administer immunizations, chapters create partnerships with physicians, nurses and other healthcare professionals to administer immunizations in a pharmacy.

Because you have been trained to administer immunizations and have demonstrated your desire to encourage preventative healthcare measures, we would like to assist you in your efforts.

We can provide you with promotional materials, such as camera read fact sheets about vaccinations, immunization schedules, posters, and bag stuffers to help you motivate your patients to become immunized.

If you are currently staffing an immunization clinic, we are eager to volunteer our efforts to help screen patients, to provide vaccine information, and to counsel on side effects.

If you are interested in working with us, please contact me at:

Sincerely,

Name

Title

Sample Fact Sheet

FACT SHEET

CONTACT: (Your contact person)
(Your phone number)

FACTS ABOUT PHARMACISTS AND IMMUNIZATIONS

- Pharmacists are the most accessible health care professionals, with the equivalent of the entire U.S. population walking into pharmacies each week.
- Pharmacies are open long hours, weekends, and some holidays, all of which allow the public to have access to pharmacists at the times most convenient to them.
- Pharmacists can administer immunizations in 49 states, and pharmacists can serve as vaccine advocates or facilitators in other states by creating partnerships with other health care professionals to have the immunizations administered in a pharmacy.
- Pharmacy immunization campaigns can target adults or children in need of vaccination, and vaccines can be administered year-round or seasonally.

IMPORTANCE OF CONSUMER EDUCATION

- Influenza has the ability to cause many health complications in elderly patients. Even though influenza vaccination rates have reached an all-time high, 40% of elderly still remain unimmunized, and this percentage is even higher in African-American and Hispanic populations.
- The influenza vaccine can prevent up to 50% to 60% of hospitalizations and 90% of deaths from influenza-related complications in the elderly.
- Pneumococcal disease, one cause of pneumonia, is to blame for up to 40,000 deaths each year in the United States. Approximately 50% of these deaths can be prevented through the use of the pneumococcal vaccine.

Sample Op-Ed Article

This can be used for a longer newsletter or magazine piece, or select paragraphs that are most appropriate for your community. Double space the copy. "-30-" means end of article.

Entertainer Natalie Cole was scheduled to sing the theme song from the movie, "A Mirror Has Two Faces," at an Academy Awards presentation, but canceled because of influenza or "the flu." Tennis stars Pete Sampras and Boris Becker have lost major tennis matches when they contracted the flu. Jim Nabors, television's Gomer Pyle, had to have a liver transplant because of hepatitis B. One of the Baltimore Orioles' top players, Brady Anderson, missed crucial games because of the chickenpox. (You may wish to use some local examples.)

All should have rolled up their sleeves and been vaccinated for these preventable diseases. Immunizations are readily available for such common adult illnesses as influenza (flu), pneumococcal disease and hepatitis B. Vaccinations against measles, mumps, rubella (German measles), hepatitis A, tetanus, diphtheria, and chickenpox are also needed by children and some adults.

October 2008 is American Pharmacists Month. The American Pharmacists Association Academy of Pharmacy Practice and Management (APhA-APPM), the American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP) are conducting a week long campaign called, Operation Immunization: *Student Pharmacists and Practitioners Protecting the Public Health*. The campaign's message is to inform adults of the importance of obtaining protection through immunizations against 10 potentially fatal or debilitating illnesses and that pharmacists and pharmacy students are important healthcare resources. This campaign extends the programming conducted during National Adult Immunization Awareness Week, September 21-27, 2008.

People have a profound misperception of what influenza or "the flu" is, according to Gregory A. Poland, MD, chair of the National Coalition for Adult Immunizations and Professor of Medicine at the Mayo Clinic. "People call fever, muscle aches, vomiting, and diarrhea, 'the flu.' Those symptoms aren't the flu. True influenza is a disease that causes high fevers and profound bone and muscle aches that may put you in bed for several days."

Five percent to 20 percent of the nation's population contract influenza annually. On average, more than 36,000 Americans die each year from flu-related illnesses. Thirty years ago the Hong Kong flu led to 34,000 deaths in the U.S. And who hasn't read in history books about the 1918 Spanish flu outbreak which killed 500,000 people here and over 20 million worldwide?

Most vulnerable to influenza are persons 65 years of age and older, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Others at risk include nursing home residents, people with diabetes or chronic disorders of the lungs or heart, and some healthcare workers. Anyone who wishes to reduce their chance of catching influenza should consider being vaccinated, particularly those who provide essential community services. Since the influenza virus changes from year to year, an annual flu shot is necessary during the fall.

The elderly are one of the major groups who are at risk of suffering most from pneumococcal disease. More than 40,000 cases and more than 4,400 deaths from invasive pneumococcal disease (bacteremia and meningitis) are estimated to have occurred in the United States in 2005. Ironically, drastic improvements in these statistics through immunization are easy and affordable. The pneumococcal vaccine, often called a "pneumonia shot," provides protection for most people indefinitely. Some at high risk may need revaccination after five years.

"The public and many health care providers may not realize that more Americans die of flu and pneumococcal disease than either breast cancer or AIDS each year," says Dr. Poland. Both the flu and pneumococcal vaccines are covered under Medicare and can be given at the same time.