

Announcing the Expanding Immunization Access in Wisconsin Project

by Ryan Psyck, Samantha Lewiston, 2021 PharmD Candidate, Erica Martin, and Sarah Sorum, PharmD

Outlined in Healthiest Wisconsin 2020, the State of Wisconsin aims to protect residents across their life span from vaccine-preventable diseases by expanding access to and administration of U.S. Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)-recommended vaccines. As demonstrated by America's Health Rankings, Wisconsin can improve. In 2016, Wisconsin ranked 47th in number of pertussis cases, a vaccine-preventable disease; 39th in percentage of children immunized; and outside the top 10 in adolescent vaccination rates including rates for HPV and meningococcal vaccines.¹ All 72 Wisconsin counties fell below Healthy People 2020's influenza vaccination rate goal of 70% for children, adolescents, and adults under 65.²

Pharmacists are well positioned to expand access by administering vaccines at pharmacies and clinics statewide as the

average American lives within five miles of a pharmacy.³ In Wisconsin, pharmacists currently have the statutory and regulatory authority to immunize patients six years and older through vaccination protocols. A physician signs a protocol to delegate authority to pharmacists within an individual pharmacy to administer specific vaccines under the criteria outlined in the protocol. These protocols vary between pharmacies as individual physicians set the criteria for which vaccines may be provided, to whom, and under what conditions. This variation and individuality often curtails a pharmacist's ability to provide or expand provision of ACIP-recommended vaccines, restricting patient access.

Pharmacies often cannot bill a patient's health plan for the provision of a vaccine administered in a pharmacy. Pharmacies may only receive reimbursement through select health plan providers or by cash payment, deterring patients. This challenge in submitting patient claims limits a pharmacy's ability to provide vaccines.

Pharmacists can currently enter patient information into the Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR). Yet, the training for all WIR users is underutilized for entering and verifying a patient's vaccination history. Proper use is necessary as WIR tracks an individual's immunization record, improves team-based care communications, and population health.

In November of 2017, The Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin (PSW) and Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) announced a partnership project between the Wisconsin Pharmacy Foundation and MCW to expand immunization access in Wisconsin. The partnership was awarded one of five funding investments through the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin (AHW) Endowment to advance policy and systems change for health.

This project aims to expand access to vaccines through a consistent vaccination protocol, addressing reimbursement barriers, and revising trainings leading to

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improved patient access to high-quality health services and expanded population health capacity and quality.

MCW Medical School is serving as the academic partner for the project. Data from WIR will be analyzed to show the longitudinal effects of this project on patient access to vaccines and the potential impact on population health.

Expert groups of pharmacists, physicians, state and national vaccine experts, health plan partners, and immunization coalitions are being formed to discuss best practices, reduce barriers, and make systems change recommendations.

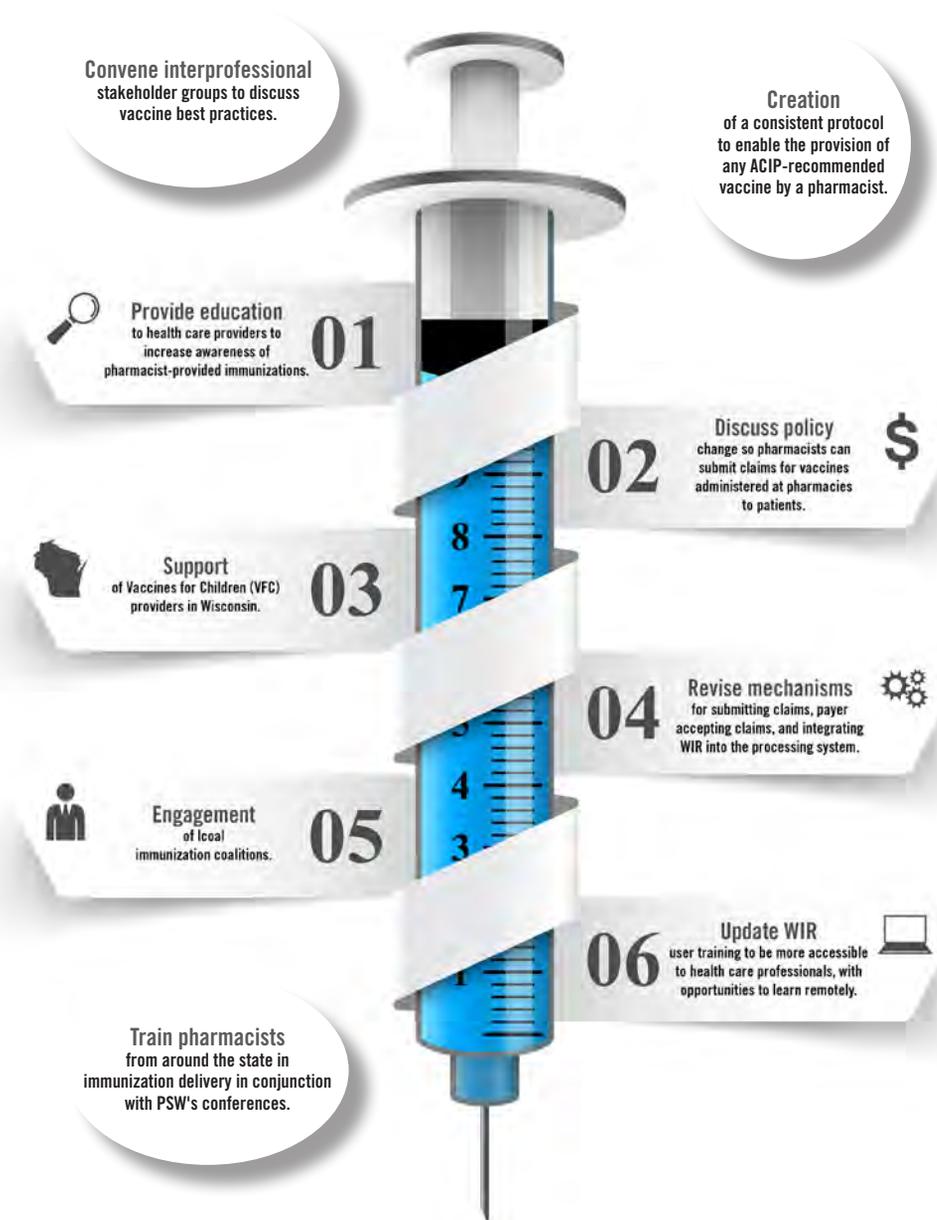
PSW is also convening insurance providers in the state to explore systematic changes to enable claims submission of ACIP-recommended vaccines administered at pharmacies. This method of dialogue has proven to be effective, most notably, in the development of Wisconsin Pharmacy Quality Collaborative (WPQC), a longstanding collaborative between insurance plans and pharmacies for comprehensive medication review (CMR) services provided to patients.

Pharmacies will be engaged to reach patients statewide, including underserved populations in both urban and rural settings. Marketing of these services among patients and local pharmacists will be spread through immunization coalitions.

By partnering with members statewide, PSW will expand access, train pharmacists, implement vaccine programs, build vaccine-delivery capacity, and increase awareness in the community. PSW continues to address immunization delivery training for pharmacists and is building upon its immunization training program, which has successfully trained 1,060 pharmacists to administer vaccines since 1998. PSW is also partnering with the National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations (NASPA) to learn best practices from other states and to disseminate findings nationwide upon project completion.

Vaccine experts and faculty from the three Wisconsin pharmacy schools will be engaged. Additionally, interprofessional educational programming will be developed to encourage work across disciplines with the aim of improving patient care.

FIGURE 1. Major Goals of the Project



The project intends to have a lasting population-health impact. Both the Healthiest Wisconsin 2020 Plan and America's Health Ranking recognize the importance of vaccines at reducing the prevalence of vaccine-preventable diseases. By creating a consistent protocol and addressing barriers to pharmacist-administered vaccines, the population will have greater access to ACIP-recommended vaccines. Moreover, Wisconsin will have more population health data from increased reporting to WIR, which may serve as a model for other states.

Ryan Psyck is the Grants & Contracts Specialist at the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin in Madison, WI. Samantha Lewiston is a 2nd year Doctor of Pharmacy Candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Pharmacy and the Executive Intern in Immunization Access Expansion at the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin in Madison, WI. Erica Martin is the Manager of Practice & Population Health Initiatives at the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin in Madison, WI. Sarah Sorum is the Senior Vice President of Professional Services at the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin in Madison, WI.

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(AHW) at the Medical College of Wisconsin
Interest in Involvement or Questions? Contact the
Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin at 608-827-9200

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Steering Committee Member Spotlights

Tim Bartholow, MD

As Chief Medical Officer of WEA Trust, Dr. Tim Bartholow is tasked with leading all clinical functions to achieve safer, more affordable care, focusing on proper access, appropriateness, harm avoidance, and engaging members to action. He encourages community health with board service to Wisconsin Literacy, United Way of Dane County, and the Wisconsin Collaborative for Health Care Quality. He advises Venture Investors, KIIO, the University of Wisconsin Master of Public Health Program, Wisconsin Community Health Fund, and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (publishes County Health Rankings).



Rebecca Bernstein, MD, MS

Rebecca Bernstein is an assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at MCW. She has special clinical interests in vulnerable populations and primary care of complex patients, and has experience working in a number of safety-net clinics. Dr. Bernstein teaches community medicine in the M3 family medicine clerkship and serves as Associate Director of the Urban and Community Health Pathway. She has a special interest in immunizations both as a clinician and community engaged researcher as well.



Kyle Beyer, PharmD, BCACP

Currently the Manager of Clinical Care for the 60+ Pick n' Save/Copps/Metro Market Pharmacies in the state of Wisconsin, Kyle oversees the MTM/Immunization services in all stores, and has worked with external partners on developing a robust worksite immunization service program across the state. Kyle has a passion for the positive impact community pharmacies can have on local communities' public health, and works closely with the Milwaukee Immunization Action Coalition to improve immunization rates in the greater Milwaukee area.



Maureen Busalacchi

Prior to joining the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment at MCW, Maureen Busalacchi served as Executive Director of Health First Wisconsin, formerly known as SmokeFree Wisconsin. For a dozen years, Maureen worked on public health policy issues including advocating for prevention funding, the smoke-free air law and raising tobacco taxes.



Kristopher Cyr, PharmD

Kristopher Cyr is a manager of retail pharmacy operations for Ascension Wisconsin. His current interest with immunizations is to expand the model of immunization delivery to his health system. He hopes to integrate with Ascension's medical clinics and hospital system to deliver vaccinations to more patients and their visitors.



Paul Hunter, MD

As Associate Medical Director of the City of Milwaukee Health Department, Dr. Paul Hunter facilitates collaboration between clinical medicine and public health by consulting and teaching about immunizations, sexually transmitted infections, and tuberculosis. Dr. Hunter writes the medical orders the public health nurses use to give thousands of immunizations each year to Milwaukee residents and represents the City of Milwaukee Health Department on the Wisconsin Council on Immunization Practices.

Steering Committee Member Spotlights - Continued

Chris Klink, PharmD, BCPS

Chris Klink works for Aurora Health Care at St. Luke's Medical Center in Milwaukee. He practices 80% in an ambulatory role in the Family Practice Clinic. He also practices 20% in the Physician Office Building (POB) Pharmacy. Chris has been a co-presenter for PSW's Immunization Certification Course since 2014. He serves as a resource for immunizations within Aurora's Pharmacy Department, presents on immunizations to the family medicine residents, and is an immunization and vaccine safety advocate in both the clinic and pharmacy settings.



Ann Lewandowski

Ann Lewandowski has worked in healthcare for more than 15 years. She received her Bachelors in Arts from University of California, Berkeley and went on to work at the California Department of Public Health Influenza Planning Unit where she assisted in vaccine allocation methods, grant work, and compliance. After moving to Wisconsin, Ann joined the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative as the Southern Wisconsin Immunization Coalition coordinator where she works closely with public health departments and private providers to raise awareness and solve regional immunization related issues.

George MacKinnon III, PhD, MS, RPH

George E. MacKinnon III joined the Medical College of Wisconsin in October 2015 as Founding Dean of the School of Pharmacy. He serves as an internal advisory board member for the MCW Genomic Science and Precision Medicine Center and has professor appointments in the Department of Family and Community Medicine and The Institute of Health and Equity. Dr. MacKinnon leads the MCW School of Pharmacy to create and deliver a dynamic and innovative Doctor of Pharmacy curriculum that will produce the pharmacist of the future. The growing team at the School of Pharmacy continues to change the health care landscape to include the pharmacist role within the interdisciplinary care team to improve patient outcomes and develop new models of care.



Karen MacKinnon, BPharm, RPh

In her role at MCW, Professor MacKinnon is the Director of Outreach at MCW School of Pharmacy where she is responsible for developing corporate partnerships, activities and services that support the creation of new pharmacy practice models. Professor MacKinnon is currently engaged with local and state immunization grants to support pharmacists' roles in optimizing and expanding immunization access in Wisconsin.



Megan Ose, PharmD

Megan Ose received her PharmD from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and her masters in Health Services Administration from the University of Michigan. As a pharmacist, she began her career at Ministry Saint Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield, covering a variety of areas including the emergency department, critical care, and pediatrics. Megan came to the Milwaukee area in 2014 and joined the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin team, which aligned with her critical care and pediatrics interests. She transitioned to the role of Operations Manager in 2015 and has a passion for quality and process improvement projects. As part of her role, she serves on the Children's Medical Group Immunization Quality and Operations Committee.



Stephanie Schauer, PhD

Stephanie Schauer is the Program Manager for the State of Wisconsin Immunization Program. Stephanie received her PhD in Microbiology/Immunology from Boston University. In 1999, she joined the Massachusetts Immunization Program as an immunization epidemiologist. In 2008, she moved to the Wisconsin Immunization Program, first serving as the WIR epidemiologist and then as the field unit supervisor prior to becoming the program manager in late 2015.

