

Innovative Pharmacy and Public Health Department Partnership Leads to More Influenza Immunizations Administered

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Unicorns, unicorns, unicorns,” said an elementary school-aged child trying to comfort her nervous classmate. “That’s what I think when I’m getting my flu shot.” The children and their parents or guardians were at their elementary school, waiting patiently to receive their influenza vaccine at a flu clinic offered in conjunction with the school’s barbeque night.

The flu clinic was a well-orchestrated event, unlike any other clinic in Wisconsin, derived from a partnership between Hy-Vee Pharmacy and Public Health Madison Dane County. The novelty of this flu clinic was every person was able to be immunized at a time and location convenient for them, regardless of insurance coverage. The event was very successful, serving over 20 families in less than a two-hour period.

Collaborating to Serve More Patients

The partnership developed to fill unmet vaccination needs in the Madison Metropolitan School District. The District was looking for a way to improve access to flu vaccines for their schools, specifically among families that the District felt might have the most difficulty with access to care. From there, the collaboration between the District, Public Health Madison Dane County, and Hy-Vee Pharmacy was generated.

Each organization’s ability to immunize patients is limited by statutory authority and the patient’s insurance eligibility. Public Health Madison Dane County is able to immunize patients of all ages who are uninsured and any children under 19 years whether insured or not, through the Vaccine for Children mass clinic program,

TABLE 1. Immunizer Determination Grid

Patient Age	Patient Insurance Coverage	Administered Vaccine
Below 6	Not applicable	Public Health through “mass vaccination status” designation
6-17	Commercial Insurance	Pharmacy
	Vaccines for Children	Public Health
18 or above	Commercial Insurance	Pharmacy
	Medicaid	Public Health or Pharmacy
	Uninsured	Public Health

a federally funded program to provide vaccines to uninsured and underinsured children. At the time of the flu clinic, Hy-Vee Pharmacy was able to immunize patients age six and older who have commercial insurance or are Medicaid members. However, Hy-Vee Pharmacy was not a Vaccines for Children provider and therefore, could not administer vaccines to many patients under age 18 qualifying for Vaccine for Children.

Seeing one organization could fill the gaps of the other organization in regards to who they are able to vaccinate, a partnership formed. This allowed the collaborative to support population health efforts to raise influenza vaccination rates in Dane County and in the District, and support the Vaccines for Children program.

Most importantly, the flu clinic protected patients. For some patients, adults and children, this clinic was the opportunity for the patient to receive their first flu shot in their life. One parent expressed sincere thanks as the clinic made it so much easier for her as a single parent to get influenza vaccine for her and her daughter.

Innovative Flu Clinic Workflow

To host a flu clinic serving multiple families simultaneously, two rooms were needed. The first room was used for screening patients for unmet influenza vaccination needs and insurance coverage. The second room was used for administering immunizations. Families stayed together throughout the entire process.

The families began in the screening room. At the first station in the room, they completed forms to screen for contraindications and provide consent. They also received vaccine information statements. Once the forms were complete, the families progressed to the second station to meet with a public health nurse who checked their immunization status on the Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR). By using WIR, the nurse determined if the patient was eligible to receive the 2018-2019 influenza vaccine. She also would print the WIR record if a patient needed other vaccines and recommend immunization at their provider or local health department as appropriate.

Once the vaccine assessment was

complete, the family moved to the next station to meet with a pharmacist about insurance coverage. A pharmacist worked this station as they regularly interact with patients regarding their insurance and are able to answer questions related to insurance. The pharmacist would record the insurance policy number on the consent form for billing upon return to the pharmacy.

Additionally, Public Health Madison Dane County was fortunate to be able to purchase a supply of influenza vaccine for adult patients who are uninsured. If a patient presented to the flu clinic without insurance, Public Health Madison Dane County was able to immunize them ensuring each person that wanted to be vaccinated could be vaccinated.

Patients were then given a number for the entire family and waited for their number to be called. On the consent forms, the pharmacist would write the number given to the patient and highlight each patient with either a green highlighter or a pink highlighter. One color indicated public health would administer the vaccine. The other color indicated the pharmacy would administer the vaccine (Table 1).

A “runner” working the clinic would take the consent forms to the second room to notify the immunizers. The immunizers would prepare the proper vaccines. Meanwhile, the family would wait for their number to be called in either the first room or at chairs outside the second room. Having a designated waiting space was helpful to keeping the clinic organized.

Inside the second room were three stations of immunization, each station marked by colored, latex-free balloons. One color indicated public health nurses would be immunizing while the other color indicated pharmacists would be immunizing. The station with both colored balloons was intended for a family with some members eligible to receive a vaccine from public health and others from pharmacy. This was known as the “combination” station as it had two immunizers, one from each organization (Figure 1).

It is important to note the color designation was for the immunizer’s use only and the patients were unaware that the balloon indicated different insurance

FIGURE 1. Vaccine Administration Stations



status. This was to respect the privacy of each patient and keep their insurance status discrete from others who were being immunized at the same time.

Once the immunizers were ready, the family’s number would be called. The immunizer would administer the vaccine and provide each child a gift certificate for a scoop of ice cream.

Set Up and Staffing

Each organization was responsible for bringing their own stock of influenza vaccine and associated supplies. For shared resources, Public Health Madison Dane County was able to provide the screens and Hy-Vee Pharmacy provided the balloons. Both organizations brought laptop computers for WIR assessment and ForwardHealth Portal access.

The flu clinic was held the same night as another school event to increase the

likelihood of families being vaccinated. The “back-to-school” dinner was held in the gym. The flu clinic was located in the neighboring classrooms, making it easy for families to find the flu clinic before or after they joined the “back-to-school” events in the gym. The logistics of pairing a flu clinic with a school event and the advertising of the flu clinic was led by the District.

Additionally, on the night of the flu clinic, to assist in vaccinating more patients, an announcement was made prior to and during the event that flu vaccines were available at no cost. This led to a slight uptick in families visiting the flu clinic. Pharmacy students were helpful in recruiting families in the hallways and answering their questions about flu vaccine.

Converting the classroom to a flu clinic only took a few minutes. Prior to moving any furniture, notes and pictures were taken so the classroom may be

TABLE 2. Staffing Needs for Immunization Clinic Serving Approximately 20 families in 2 Hours

Screening Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One staff to screen WIR • One staff to collect insurance information (recommended to be a pharmacist)
Administration Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One public health nurse to administer at public health station • One pharmacist to administer at pharmacy station • One public health nurse to administer at combination station • One pharmacist
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One staff in hallway to direct families to flu clinic • Two staff to run consent forms from Screening Room to Administration Room • One interpreter for families that spoke Spanish

restored after the clinic. Then, the desks were pushed together to make stations for immunization. Any excess desks were pushed to the sides of the room. All tables were wiped down with disinfectant prior to vaccine supply set up.

While using classrooms for the flu clinic worked well, there are various classroom supplies available as distractions. Using a conference room within the school is preferential to using classrooms to respect the space of the teacher and decrease noise and clean up.

The clinic operated by a team of pharmacists, public health nurses, pharmacist students, nursing students, and volunteers. Each team member completed tasks as legally permissible (Table 2).

Unique Model

Through the partnership between pharmacy and public health, more patients can become immunized through increased vaccine access. This model can be replicated statewide to better serve patients.

Expanding Immunization Access in Wisconsin

The Medical College of Wisconsin Pharmacy School, Medical College of Wisconsin Medical School, Wisconsin Pharmacy Foundation, and Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin (PSW) have been working with partners statewide to expand patient access to life-saving immunizations. Sustainable and expanded patient access to recommended vaccines will be completed by further engaging pharmacists as immunizers and by removing barriers to pharmacist-administered vaccines. Access will be expanded by creating a consistent vaccine offering at pharmacies, revising PSW's immunization administration training, collaborating with partners statewide, addressing financial sustainability, and engaging patients and immunization coalitions. This investment, funded in part by the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment (AHW) at the Medical College of Wisconsin, aims to increase the number of vaccines administered, thus, reducing the prevalence of vaccine preventable diseases in Wisconsin.

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Supporting Access Expansion and Vaccination Efficiency in Clinics and Communities

Wednesday, February 26, 2020
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