

Immunization Update: What Every Pharmacist Needs to Know

Courtney Humphries, PharmD

PGY1 Community Pharmacy Practice Resident, Kroger Pharmacy

With the passage of House Bill 832: Expanded Role of Immunizing Pharmacists, North Carolina (NC) pharmacists are now able to impact patients' lives by providing additional vaccines via protocol. These vaccines which can be administered to patients ≥ 18 years of age are: pneumococcal, herpes zoster, hepatitis B, meningococcal, Td/Tdap vaccine (not to a patient with an open wound), and influenza (to patients ≥ 14 years of age). Any additional CDC recommended vaccine can be administered via a prescription.

There are some key pieces of the new legislation which are important for every immunizing pharmacist to be aware of. Pharmacists must be trained on the North Carolina Immunization Registry (NCIR). Any independent pharmacy not affiliated with Mutual can contact Hope Watson (hope.watson@dhhs.nc.gov) for more information about the NCIR. Prior to administering a vaccine, the pharmacist should access this registry to determine if the vaccine is appropriate. Within 72 hours of vaccine administration, pharmacists should notify the primary care provider (PCP) identified by the patient **AND** document the vaccine in the NCIR. Documenting on the NCIR will not automatically notify the PCP, this should be completed by each pharmacy. If a patient does not have a PCP, then the pharmacist should provide them with a copy with a document outlining the benefits of one; this document is available via the NC Board of Pharmacy (NCBOP) at <http://www.ncbop.org/PDF/WhatIsAPrimaryCarePhysician.pdf>. A minimum standard screening questionnaire and safety procedures have been developed and should be used to prepare appropriate changes to protocols; this document is available via the NCBOP at <http://www.ncbop.org/PDF/ImmunizingPharmacistsMinScreeningQuestionnaire091313.pdf>. The screening questions should appear on written consent forms used by the pharmacy; consent forms may contain additional questions to the 14 already established.

Every immunizing pharmacist needs to stay up-to-date on current vaccine recommendations. Here are some recent updates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP):

- Any person ≥ 6 months of age should receive inactivated influenza vaccine, including pregnant women
- Women should receive one dose of Tdap during each pregnancy (after 20 weeks gestation; preferred during 27-36 weeks gestation)
- All adults should receive one dose of Tdap, if not previously vaccinated
- Persons with immunocompromising conditions should receive both the pneumococcal conjugate and the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine
- Hepatitis B vaccine should be administered to persons < 60 years of age with diabetes (for persons > 60 years of age, it is at the discretion of the clinician)

Need more information? Visit one of these reliable resources:

- American Pharmacists Association: <http://www.pharmacist.com/immunization-center>
- CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines>
- Immunization Action Coalition: <http://www.immunize.org>
- NCBOP: <http://www.ncbop.org>
- NC Immunization Branch: <http://www.immunize.nc.gov/providers>
- NCAP (****Coming soon**: example protocols, consent forms, etc.**): <http://www.ncpharmacists.org>