



PHARMACISTS ARE FRONT LINE PARTNERS IN PUBLIC HEALTH EXPANDED AUTHORITY IS NEEDED TO ADMINISTER VACCINE FOR COVID-19

Scientists are working around the clock to develop an effective COVID-19 vaccine. When that vaccine is available, we will need to get it quickly to every eligible person in the United States. That's why the American Disease Prevention Coalition is calling on states to lay the groundwork now by ensuring that pharmacists are permitted to provide and administer all Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP)-recommended or U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved vaccines.

While pharmacists in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico currently have authority to administer at least some vaccinations, extending this authority to cover all vaccine types for the varying patient populations is long overdue. Pharmacists play a vital role in raising vaccine awareness, assessing a person's immunization status; making recommendations on needed vaccines; and administering and reporting vaccines that are provided to their patients into federal and state immunization registries. The daily interaction pharmacists have with customers is critically important, especially during times of public health crisis when so many other medical providers are overburdened with an influx of patients and/or are providing care using telemedicine practices. Considering that 9 out of 10 Americans live within five miles of a community pharmacy, our nation's pharmacists have never been more essential to delivering critical, in-person healthcare needs—including *and especially* vaccines.

Currently, state laws vary widely with respect to which vaccines pharmacists may administer and any associated minimum age requirements for who can receive a pharmacist-administered vaccine. For example, in Wisconsin, pharmacists are permitted to initiate and administer all CDC recommended vaccines. However, not all states provide that level of authority. For instance, in some states, pharmacists can only administer a vaccine if a doctor provides a special prescription to that effect. These variances will make it harder for certain communities where pharmacists subjected to these restrictions to provide new vaccines to patients, such as the one being developed for COVID-19.

Research shows how pharmacists can play a key role in flattening the curve of pandemics. A Johns Hopkins University [study](#) found that allowing pharmacists to dispense flu vaccinations during a severe flu epidemic would avert up to 23.7 million symptomatic cases, preventing up to 210,228 deaths, and saving \$2.8 billion in direct medical costs. In fact, during the H1N1 influenza epidemic, pharmacists played a critical role in improving access to the vaccine developed to help stop the further spread of this disease.¹² Pharmacists have the knowledge and experience to help our nation respond to pandemics such as COVID-19.

Every state must ensure that all pharmacists can administer all FDA approved or ACIP recommended vaccines. States should make these changes now so that pharmacists can administer a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it reaches the market. The lives of millions of Americans may well depend on it.

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6279616/>