

# Reasons to Support Pharmacist-Administered Vaccinations

- Despite recent headlines about a rise in rates of vaccine preventable diseases like the flu and measles, the adult vaccination rate across the United States [remains lower than what is recommended](#) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and well below the goal of [‘Healthy People 2020’](#) of 90%.
- While childhood vaccination rates hover in the 90% range depending [on state and local data](#), the average adult rate for vaccination is much lower.
- [A recent study](#) from the University of North Carolina found that unvaccinated adults cost the U.S. economy \$7.1 billion
- One issue often cited about why adults may not be fully vaccinated---convenience.
- If the only way to get a vaccine involves booking an appointment with a healthcare provider, commuting to and waiting at that appointment, many adults say they simply don’t have that time to spare.
- That is why making vaccination more available and more convenient is a prudent move when it comes to increasing overall vaccination rates and benefiting public health.
- Pharmacists can play a key role in increasing adult immunizations rates because they have the ability to reach that population on a more regular basis than a doctor—people are more likely to be picking up medications from a pharmacy than to going to the doctor’s office.
- They can also identify high-risk patients (diabetics, lung disease, heart disease etc.) and encourage them to get the recommended vaccines.
- All 50 states allow pharmacists to vaccinate for the flu, but with other vaccines availability at pharmacies varies widely state by state.
- As of July 2016, 17 states allow pharmacists to independently administer select vaccines; the other 33 states, Puerto Rico, and DC require [other administration models](#).
- [HHS provides an online tool to](#) help patients determine what vaccines are available at pharmacies near them.
- Having easy access to critical vaccinations makes it more likely that the entire population is safeguarded against vaccine-preventable diseases. It only makes sense for pharmacists to be able to administer routine vaccine shots like they currently do with flu shots.

- There are several [vaccines that adults 19 years and older need to have](#) in order to protect themselves and others from potentially life-threatening illnesses. Being able to go to a pharmacy without a prescription, and get these vaccines, will make it easier on adults and likely lead to increased rates of vaccination.
- For older adults 65+, there can be additional access issues because family physicians aren't able to stock and bill all of the available vaccines, especially those reimbursed under Part D. Physician offices can bill under Part B (pneumococcal, flu, hep B), but vaccines like Tdap and both zoster vaccines are under Part D and physician offices aren't set up for that type of billing, while pharmacies are. Additional info available [here](#).
- A [January 2018 survey](#) showed that adults over the age of 40 would like more health care services available at their local pharmacy. Other key findings:
  - When asked which services their pharmacy could add to make health care more convenient, 29% of older adults cited access to all vaccines.
  - Of those who have been vaccinated at a local pharmacy, 58% said it is more convenient than visiting their doctor and 46% said it is quicker.
  - Meanwhile, 68% of older adults said having influenza or strep testing at their local pharmacy would be easier than visiting their doctor.
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- Over the years, many states have expanded certain health care providers' roles in an effort to increase the pool of health care professionals who can give shots and hopefully, to increase immunization rates. Although physician assistants and nurse practitioners certainly fall within this category, pharmacists are the newest group to expand their scope of practice to include vaccine administration.

# Additional Background Resources

The CDC has a list of [recommended vaccines for adults](#).

In June 2017, Pharmacy Times published an in-depth look at the state by state differences in vaccination availability in pharmacies. [Read the full report here](#).

Additionally, Pharmacy Times has published [a list of Immunization laws around the nation](#) as of July 2017.

The American Pharmacist Association has multiple online tools to help identify in which states pharmacists can vaccinate against various diseases:

[Click here](#) for state by state maps (last updated 2015)

[Click here](#) for a list by vaccine type

Healthy People 2020 targets for immunization and infectious diseases are available [here](#).

In a [letter](#) to the American Pharmacists Association, Assistant Surgeon General, RADM Ann Schuchat, applauded efforts for its “immunization neighborhood” policy to help meet the immunization needs of a community and said continued effort is critical.