

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/vaccination/preparing-pharmacists-through-the-apha-immunization-delivery-program/13740/>

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Preparing Pharmacists Through the APhA Immunization Delivery Program

Dr. Turck:

Welcome to *VacciNation* on ReachMD. On this program, we're going to hear from Dr. Amy Mgonja, who is a clinical consultant pharmacist at Dawa Rx Consulting in Boise, Idaho. Dr. Mgonja is here to discuss the APhA Pharmacy-Based Immunization Delivery Program and the pharmacist's role in disease prevention and immunization education. Let's hear from her now.

Dr. Mgonja:

The APhA Pharmacy-Based Immunization program is a 20-hour program that educates pharmacists on how to administer vaccines. It covers routine immunizations based on the ACIP immunization schedule for child, adult, and medical conditions. It does include a hands-on immunization training, which would include both intramuscular and subcutaneous injections. It covers the safety of both providers and patients during the program. So safety of the provider would include how to manage a needle stick after giving somebody an immunization, and safety of the patient includes how to administer medications in the case of an anaphylactic reaction for the patient. There is an in-depth review of the immune system, which is necessary for pharmacists to understand how different vaccinations can work.

By training pharmacists to administer vaccines, it has improved the patient's ability to receive immunizations, and this will improve patient care. It's in the best interest of the entire healthcare system to reduce barriers for patients to receive vaccinations. Vaccinations are some of the most effective treatments we have and have the unique position of preventing disease rather than treating disease after it's developed. Up to 90% of people live within 5 miles of a pharmacy, and pharmacies are open longer hours than most medical centers, so those both would decrease a barrier to getting a vaccination. Pharmacists can also increase the rate of vaccinations by playing administrative roles, such as including vaccinations on formularies and inpatient facilities and helping create protocols and collaborative practice agreements. They can also add immunizations as part of an infection prevention program.

Pharmacists play an important role in educating patients on the importance of vaccines. The best indicator of whether a patient will receive a vaccine or not is whether it's recommended by a healthcare provider, so pharmacists are the most accessible healthcare providers and have frequent interactions with patients and can recommend vaccinations when they're needed. There's a lot of misinformation about vaccinations, and because pharmacists are easily available, they can help dispel those myths and provide reliable resources for patients to educate themselves about vaccinations. Also, because pharmacists see patients frequently with prescription fills, they can target specific patients who may be at increased risk of specific diseases, such as patients with diabetes or heart or lung disease or somebody picking up a medication that can reduce the immune system. There are specific vaccines that these patients may need, whereas the general population might not need those. Likewise, somebody picking up prenatal vitamins or someone getting fertility treatments, it's important to let them know that both parents and family members may need an additional vaccination in order to prevent a newborn baby from getting sick. Pharmacists can also play a role in educating other providers about vaccinations, such as in a long-term care facility or correctional facility where those patients are at an increased risk of vaccine-preventable diseases, and the pharmacists can help educate providers to make sure those patients have been vaccinated also.

Dr. Turck:

That was Dr. Amy Mgonja talking about the pharmacist's role in disease prevention and immunization education. To access this and other episodes in our series, visit reachmd.com/vaccination, where you can Be Part of the Knowledge. Thanks for listening.