



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CHAIN DRUG STORES

January 12, 2010

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

RE: National Influenza Vaccination Week

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

I am writing today in support of National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW). The National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) and our members have been proactively engaged in efforts of federal, state, and local public health officials to increase access to H1N1 vaccine over the last six months. Through our involvement with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), and the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), chain community pharmacies have been recognized as key providers of H1N1 vaccine and integral components of public health vaccination plans. Pharmacies are the most accessible healthcare providers, with more than 80,000 pharmacist-vaccinators in pharmacies and walk-in clinics in all 50 states. Located on average within about five miles of each American, pharmacies are truly the face of neighborhood healthcare.

The National Association of Chain Drug Stores represents 154 traditional drug stores, supermarkets, and mass merchants with pharmacies – from regional chains with four stores to national companies. Chains operate 37,000 pharmacies, and employ more than 2.5 million employees, including 118,000 full-time pharmacists. They fill more than 2.5 billion prescriptions annually, which is more than 72 percent of annual prescriptions in the United States.

During the week before Christmas, NACDS worked with CDC on its supplemental distribution plan for H1N1 vaccine and supplies and encouraged our members to participate, which resulted in eleven of the largest chain pharmacies placing orders from CDC and an increase in pharmacy H1N1 vaccine orders through state distribution systems. These pharmacies have issued numerous press releases announcing the availability of H1N1 vaccine, as well as local and in-store promotions.

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NACDS issued a news release to publicize NIVW and has kept our members updated in our regular publications about vaccination news, direct email notices of the NACCHO,

and HHS webinars scheduled during NIVW. Our direct communications are to specific individuals within the member companies, relevant coverage in the NACDS *CEO/Issue Update*, and *NACDS E-ssential* newsletters. NACDS has also maintained proactive media pitching on vaccination issues and has been included in media stories in outlets ranging from trade press, to regional and national press, to CNN.

NACDS will continue to work with you and your agencies on National Influenza Vaccination Week to further demonstrate the role and value of pharmacy as a primary source of vaccinations during influenza season and in emergency pandemic planning and preparation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Steve Anderson, IOM, CAE
President and CEO
National Association of Chain Drug Stores