



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CHAIN DRUG STORES

Statement
Of
The National Association of Chain Drug Stores
For
The 21st Century Cures Roundtable – Vaccine Focus

*Community Pharmacists Play an Important Role in Providing
Accessible and Cost-Effective Vaccine Services*

October 9, 2014
2:30 p.m.

Hammer Institutes for Health Sciences
Research Triangle Park, NC

National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS)
1776 Wilson Blvd., Suite 200
Arlington, VA 22209
703-549-3001
www.nacds.org

The National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) thanks Congresswoman Ellmers and other stakeholders who are participating in the 21st Century Cures Roundtable for the opportunity to share our perspectives on pharmacist-provided vaccine services. We commend the Congresswoman for facilitating this roundtable discussion on the important topic of vaccines. NACDS and the chain pharmacy industry are committed to partnering with policymakers and other stakeholders at the federal and state level to promote access to life-saving vaccines that prevent infectious diseases that once routinely killed or harmed thousands each year, and to improve overall vaccine rates.

NACDS represents traditional drug stores and supermarkets and mass merchants with pharmacies. Chains operate more than 40,000 pharmacies, and NACDS' 125 chain member companies include regional chains, with a minimum of four stores, and national companies. Chains employ more than 3.8 million individuals, including 175,000 pharmacists. They fill over 2.7 billion prescriptions yearly, and help patients use medicines correctly and safely, while offering innovative services that improve patient health and healthcare affordability. NACDS members also include more than 800 supplier partners and nearly 40 international members representing 13 countries. For more information, visit www.NACDS.org.

Community Pharmacists' Important Role in Providing Vaccine Services.

As the face of neighborhood healthcare, community pharmacies and pharmacists provide convenient, accessible and cost-effective health services including immunizations to their local communities. Highly educated to provide patient care services, pharmacists are well-suited to help increase vaccination rates and further reduce the incidence of vaccine preventable diseases.

Over the years, community pharmacists have worked diligently with other healthcare providers to improve vaccine rates. In fact, one study showed that as states changed their laws to allow pharmacists to provide more immunizations, those states' overall vaccine rates increased as pharmacists were able to identify new, previously unvaccinated populations for immunization.¹ Due to their accessibility in local communities, community pharmacists

complement the work of other healthcare providers to vaccinate populations who are less likely to be seen by clinicians.ⁱⁱ

Community pharmacies offer cost-effective vaccine services.

Pharmacists-provided vaccines yield healthcare savings for consumers, health insurers and other third party payors. As demonstrated through the TRICARE program, significant savings were achieved by the Department of Defense when policies were implemented to allow TRICARE beneficiaries to obtain flu & pneumococcal vaccines from retail pharmacies. It was estimated that for the first six months that beneficiaries could obtain their vaccinations from pharmacists, 18,361 vaccines for H1N1, flu & pneumococcal were administered at a cost of nearly \$300,000; had those vaccines been administered under the medical benefit, the cost to TRICARE would have been \$1.8M.ⁱⁱⁱ Because of these savings, the Department of Defense opted to expand coverage of the portfolio of vaccines that TRICARE beneficiaries may obtain from community pharmacies to include all CDC-recommended vaccines.

Considering the improvements in public health and the healthcare savings that can be achieved through maximizing pharmacist-provided vaccine services, we encourage policymakers to identify opportunities to further utilize community pharmacists to reach under-vaccinated populations, particularly in states where restrictive state laws limit the vaccine services that pharmacists can provide. To optimize the use of community pharmacists to further improve vaccine rates, policymakers should work to modernize these types of restrictive state laws.

NACDS thanks Congresswoman Ellmers and participants of the 21st Century Cures Roundtable for consideration of our comments. We look forward to working with policymakers and stakeholders on policies that promote the health and welfare of our patients and all Americans.

ⁱ Steyer TE, Ragucci KR, Pearson WS, Mainous AG 3rd. The role of pharmacists in the delivery of influenza vaccinations. *Vaccine*. 2004;22(8): 1001-1006.

ⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Place of influenza vaccination among adults—United States, 2010-11 influenza season. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*. 2011;60(23):781-785.

ⁱⁱⁱ 76 FR 41063-41065.