Pneumococcal Vaccine Services and Harlem Community Pharmacies

Educational intervention to address racial and ethnic disparities in pneumococcal immunization rates.

Project Aims:
1. Increase community pharmacy provision of pneumococcal immunization services in the largely minority low-income New York City neighborhoods of Central and East Harlem (CEH).
2. Identify barriers to greater pharmacy pneumococcal vaccine delivery and possible means of addressing them.

Methods

- **Target population**: Supervising pharmacists at the 87 (67 independent; 20 chain) retail pharmacies operating in Harlem in July 2013.
- **Educational intervention components**: pharmacy visits, comprehensive immunization resource manual, pneumococcal fact sheet and pneumococcal vaccine algorithm, client educational promotional materials.
- **Intervention’s impact measured** by comparison of quantitative data from initial and one-year follow up surveys regarding pneumococcal knowledge and immunization activities.
Findings

Participation:
Initial Survey: 56 (64%) of 87 CEH community pharmacies
1 Year Follow Up: 44 (79%) of initial 56 participants

At project’s inception:
Differences in pneumococcal immunization “readiness” and activities between chain and independent pharmacies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pneumococcal Vaccine</th>
<th>Chains</th>
<th>Independents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># Administered in Prior Year</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possess Standing Orders</td>
<td>12 (100%)</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require Immunization Certificate</td>
<td>12 (100%)</td>
<td>15 (34%)</td>
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Pharmacists at Independents identified >>> barriers (primarily financial) to immunization delivery.

Comparison of Initial and 1 year Follow Up Survey Data

• 2X ↑ possession pneumococcal standing orders among CEH pharmacies overall
• > 5X ↑ possession pneumococcal standing orders among independents
• 13% ↑ pharmacists’ pneumococcal risk knowledge (p = .001)
• ↑ pharmacists’ pneumococcal vaccine recommendations (p = .000)
• No Increase in # pneumococcal vaccines administrated
Barriers to Pneumococcal Vaccine Delivery

Actionable Barriers:

- Independent pharmacies (77% CEH pharmacies): limited immunization “readiness” and interest
- Absence of pneumococcal quality assurance measures at pharmacies or on part of health insurers
- Lack of vaccine reminder systems; inability to use current pharmacy management software systems in that capacity due to functional limitations
- Financial considerations: Client copayment and Insufficient reimbursement
- Paucity of demand