



Description of the Pharmacy Team's Roles in COVID-19

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic pharmacists and the pharmacy team have “ran to the fire versus away from it” to serve the healthcare needs of their patients and the communities they serve. Pharmacy Teams across all practice settings engaged in ensuring continuity of care while the majority of health system resources were diverted to addressing the rising threat from the COVID-19 pandemic. Pharmacy Team Members include: pharmacists, student pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, clerks and administrative staff, and pharmacy management. Supporting these teams with information, guidance, resources and advocacy were national, state and local pharmacy associations like the American Pharmacists Association and its state affiliates and collaborating organizations.

Risking their own health and wellness, Pharmacy Team Members maintained patient access to medications, vaccines and other patient care services within hospitals, community pharmacies, long-term care facilities, patient homes and other care delivery settings. Pharmacy Team Members provide their patients and communities with important patient care, education, information and guidance consistent with recommendations provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other reputable sources. Some of the COVID-19 related services provided by Pharmacy Team Members during COVID-19 include:

- Maintaining continuity of care and filling system gaps to reduce pressure on an increasingly stressed health care system
- Infection control guidance and the provision of equipment (when it became available) such as Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) – masks, gloves, gowns, eye shields, hand sanitizer, wipes, etc., and implementation of social distancing practices (curb-side pick-up, home delivery, tele-pharmacy, electronic communications)
- Compounded hand-sanitizer for their communities, donating product to first responders and other community responders
- Addressing medication supply challenges and shortages; Protecting the integrity of our nation's pharmaceutical supply system
- COVID-19 case tracing and guiding public on isolation implementation

- COVID-19 active infection and/or antibody point-of-care testing: sample collection, collaboration with laboratories, running tests, interpreting test results, reporting test results, and consulting with patients and other care givers regarding test results and next steps
- Administering childhood and adolescent vaccines in accordance with FDA, CDC and state jurisdictions to help keep children up to date with immunizations per the ACIP guidelines.
- Administering COVID-19 vaccines in accordance with FDA, CDC and state jurisdiction recommendations. Included within this process was:
 - Vaccine and vaccine supply management and inventory control.
 - Vaccine storage and handling (ranged from deep-freeze storage to management of vaccine during mass clinics and other delivery sites)
 - Vaccine appointment management and efforts to reduce vaccine wastage
 - Preparation of vaccine doses
 - Administration of vaccines by recognized/authorized healthcare professions that included pharmacists, student pharmacists and pharmacy technicians
 - Documentation of vaccine supply and doses administered within federal and state databases and provision of vaccination cards
 - Addressing questions and concerns by individuals and communities
 - Coordinating with local health departments and the federal government to ensure access to priority groups
 - Intra- and Inter- professional collaboration with other healthcare providers (i.e. nurses, physicians)
 - Contributing to efforts addressing Vaccine Confidence and increasing access to vaccinations within hard-to-reach populations / communities

The efforts of the Pharmacy Team, with other members of their communities, emulate the meaning of the “Immunization Neighborhood,” a term coined by the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) and embraced by the public health community: *Collaboration, Coordination and Communication among all immunization stakeholders to meet the immunization needs of patients and protect the public from vaccine-preventable diseases*. The pharmacy profession seeks permanent recognition of their valued roles and contributions provided during the pandemic to the everyday provision of care outside of declared emergencies, thereby supporting strong community-based healthcare infrastructure.

Other insights and information can be found at:

<https://vaccineconfident.pharmacist.com/>

<https://www.pharmacist.com/coronavirus>