

# Pharmacy students as immunizers: Review and policy recommendations

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**OBJECTIVES:** Despite universal influenza vaccine availability, vaccination rates have stagnated at suboptimal levels. To address this issue, several provinces and all US states authorize pharmacists to provide influenza vaccination. Pharmacy students are another potential vaccine administrator and inclusion of this opportunity during their undergraduate training has the potential to both assist pharmacist vaccination efforts and improve students' readiness to provide these services upon graduation. The goal of this initiative was to summarize pharmacy students-as-immunizers literature and regulatory authority and make Canadian policy recommendations with the available evidence.

**METHODS:** Data was collected regarding which Canadian provinces and US states have legislation allowing pharmacy students to immunize, which vaccines are they permitted to give, what training is required and what level of supervision is mandated. A literature review was also conducted to examine the student, patient and community benefits of pharmacy students-as-immunizers.

**RESULTS:** Four Canadian provinces and 30 US states have legislation permitting students to administer vaccines. In all cases, students must have completed immunization training and be under the supervision of a pharmacist authorized to immunize. The literature provides a range of examples of strategies for students-as-immunizers including embedding in rotations, student-run clinics and involvement in health fairs and community based clinics. Students on campus, general public and high risk groups were targeted populations.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Students-as-immunizers is a mechanism that should be considered to promote the role of the pharmacist and increase the availability and accessibility of vaccines. Specific policy recommendations will be summarized.