

# Pharmacies - Data Brief

## Vermont Immunization Registry

### Background

The role of pharmacies in the health care system has evolved over time. No longer simply a marketplace for medications, they offer other health services, including vaccinations, which makes them a key player in increasing access to vaccines for adults in Vermont. Laws vary from state to state as to the patient age at which pharmacies may administer vaccines. In Vermont, a pharmacist may administer vaccine to patients 18 years and older<sup>1</sup>.

### Pharmacies and the Vermont Immunization Registry

Vermont law requires that all vaccines administered be entered into the Vermont Immunization Registry (IMR). In 2014, the IMR began receiving data from pharmacies across the state. As of September 1st, 2018, 107 pharmacies in Vermont (73%) were sending immunization data to the IMR. The IMR offers a number of solutions for pharmacies to meet their reporting requirement. Not all pharmacies currently administer vaccine.

The table below shows the chain pharmacies in Vermont that report immunizations to the IMR. Most of these send a monthly extract for import into the IMR. Many independent pharmacies also report, but most of these smaller sites enter information directly into the system.

Pharmacy chain	Number of Locations
CVS	10
Hannaford	13
Kinney	21
Price Chopper	6
Rite Aid/Walgreens	40
Shaw's/Osco	5
Walmart	6

Table 1

### Vaccines Provided by Pharmacies

The vaccine recommendations for adults vary depending on a person's age, risk factors, and medical history. All adults should receive an annual flu vaccine, a Tdap vaccine once and a Td booster every ten years. Women should get the Tdap vaccine during each pregnancy.<sup>2</sup> The preferred zoster vaccine, Shingrix, is a two-dose series recommended for adults age 50 and older. The pneumococcal vaccine series consists of two different vaccines administered one year apart, and is recommended for adults age 65 and older.<sup>3</sup> Adults with certain medical conditions, including lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, or a weakened immune system, may have additional vaccines recommended, or vaccines recommended outside of the typical ages.

Seasonal flu vaccines account for most of the immunizations administered and reported by pharmacies. A complete breakdown of the type of vaccine administered by pharmacies and reported to the IMR is shown in table 2. Because both medical practices and pharmacies can report doses of vaccine to the IMR, and because a medical practice may report a patient's pharmacy-administered immunization more quickly, the number of doses administered at pharmacies may be higher than Figure 2. What is apparent is that pharmacies are providing a significant measure of the vaccine administered to the population aged 65 years and above.

## Vaccines Reported by Pharmacies July 1, 2017 thru July 1, 2018

<i>Ages 18-49</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Ages 50-64</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Ages 65+</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Influenza</i>	15,581	73.4%	<i>Influenza</i>	14,340	76.7%	<i>Influenza</i>	19,077	70.7%
<i>Pneumococcal</i>	522	2.5%	<i>Pneumococcal</i>	857	4.6%	<i>Pneumococcal</i>	3,753	13.9%
<i>Tdap</i>	2,848	13.4%	<i>Tdap</i>	823	4.4%	<i>Tdap</i>	815	3.0%
<i>Zoster(Shingles)</i>	8	0.04%	<i>Zoster(Shingles)</i>	1,896	10.1%	<i>Zoster(Shingles)</i>	2,774	10.3%
<i>Other</i>	2,220	10.5%	<i>Other</i>	770	4.1%	<i>Other</i>	546	2.0%
<i>Total</i>	21,239	100%	<i>Total</i>	18,686	100%	<i>Total</i>	26,965	100%

Table 2

Some of the vaccines available in the “other” category include hepatitis A, hepatitis B, HPV, MMR, meningococcal, polio, and varicella. Check with your local pharmacy about vaccines are available.

### The Impact of Pharmacies

Between July 1, 2017 and July 1, 2018, the IMR received record of 91,593 immunizations from pharmacies. While many types of organizations report adult immunizations to the IMR (hospitals, nursing homes, primary care providers, and flu clinics to name a few), the data indicate that certain vaccines are more likely to be sought at pharmacies. More than a third of Shingles vaccines administered to Vermont adults were administered by pharmacies. Table 3 below shows that more than a third of Shingles vaccine doses, over 20% of flu shots, over 10% of pneumococcal vaccines to adults were reported by pharmacies.

### Adult Vaccines reported to IMR by Source July 1, 2017 thru July 1, 2018

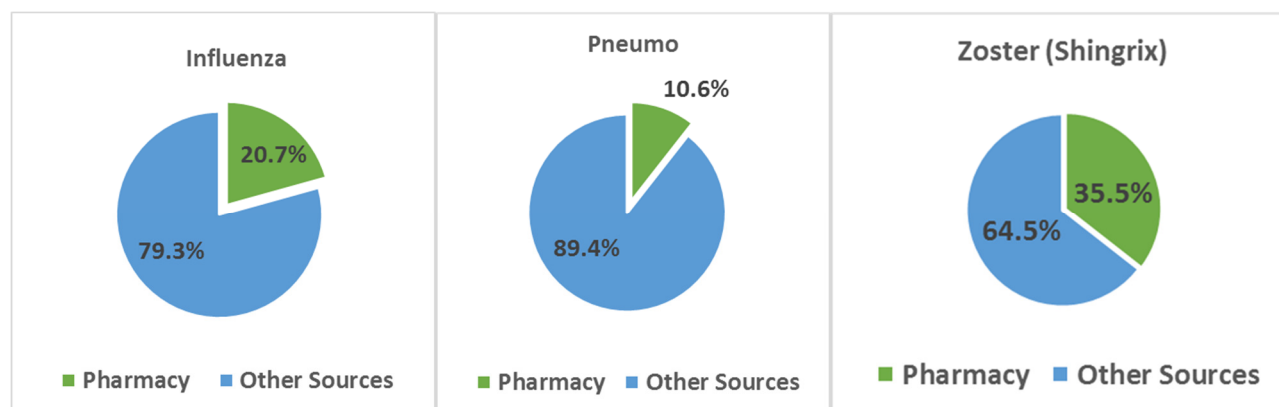


Table 3

### Going Forward

Increasing adult vaccination rates is a public health goal<sup>4</sup>, and pharmacies can be an important partner in achieving this. When a person receives an immunization at a pharmacy, a hospital, or another provider office, the IMR is a consolidated source of immunization history that any Vermont health care provider – including licensed pharmacists and pharmacy techs can access. The IMR also contains a vaccine forecasting feature to assist users in following schedule guidance and avoiding invalid doses of vaccine.

*For more information, please contact Bridget Ahrens, Immunization Registry Manager, (802) 951-4094.*

<sup>1</sup> Administrative Rules of the Board of Pharmacy, <https://www.sec.state.vt.us/media/702345/5-RX-Rules-2015-Final-Adopted-August-24-2015.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Vaccine Information for Adults, <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> Pneumococcal Vaccination, <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/pneumo/default.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Immunization and Infectious Disease Performance Dashboard, [http://healthvermont.gov/hv2020/dashboard/imm\\_infectious.aspx](http://healthvermont.gov/hv2020/dashboard/imm_infectious.aspx)