Health Officials Warn of Twindemic as Flu Season Approaches

Health experts have warned about the possibility of what they refer to as a "Twindemic" with the flu season quickly approaching. In an effort to avoid a strenuous flu season, the Trump administration issued a declaration to authorize pharmacists nationwide to administer the flu shot to children three and older. The CDC recommends that everyone get their flu shot by the end of October. For reference, nearly 36% of the nation's children (or roughly 25,000,000 children) did not get the flu shot in last year's flu season. An estimated 434 children died from the flu last season.

> *"Today's action means easier access to lifesaving vaccines for our children, as we seek to ensure immunization rates remain high during the COVID-19 pandemic," US Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said in a press release.*

> *Despite the Trump administration's new policy, many pharmacies still won't vaccinate children against flu*

According to CNN, it looks like the new policy by the Trump administration did not land well amongst pharmacies across the country. The majority of pharmacies around the country are still refusing to vaccinate children that young. Additionally, many pharmacies were unaware of the push by the Trump administration to get more children vaccinated against the flu.

Previously, 20 states allowed pharmacists to vaccinate children three and up without a prescription. In the remaining 30 states that did not vaccinate children in pharmacies, CNN called 176 pharmacies across the country to ask if they would

now begin vaccinating children. Only 31 out of 176 pharmacies said they would vaccinate a three-year-old without a prescription. The National Association of Chain Drug Stores has pushed for pharmacists to be able to vaccinate children for years and are in support of the new push by the Trump administration. The American Academy of Pediatrics does not object to pharmacists administering the flu vaccine to children but does not support the Health and Human Services declaration to allow pharmacists to give all childhood vaccines.

While many pharmacies are saying they will not vaccinate children, many officials are upset with the way the Trump administration rolled out the new declaration, saying that it was not promoted well enough, or talked about enough.

> *"You can have the best policy in place, but there are many steps you have to take to implement that policy. There has to be a large, concerted effort," said Dr. Leana Wen, a CNN medical analyst and former Baltimore city health commissioner.*
>
> *Despite the Trump administration's new policy, many pharmacies still won't vaccinate children against flu*

Mainstream news sources will fail to acknowledge why pharmacists around the country will not be vaccinating young children, but the reality is that the risk is too great and the reward is too low. Why else would pharmacies refuse to vaccinate children? If vaccines are truly completely safe with no risk of negative side effects, and pharmacists are already able to vaccine adults against the flu- then why not just let them vaccinate children? Most people would argue that the benefits outweigh the drawbacks when it comes to vaccines, that being said, it looks like many pharmacies around the country are unwilling to take that risk.

While pharmacies around the country are trying to decide

rather or not they will vaccinate young children for the flu, Singapore has halted the use of two of its flu vaccines after 48 people died in South Korea after receiving the flu vaccine. Health officials later reported no connection between the deaths and the flu vaccine, and are still urging people to get vaccinated. You can read more about that in this article.

Last year the flu vaccine was only 29% effective. This year, albeit better than last year, the flu vaccine is only 45% effective. Kind of… this year's flu vaccine is 45% effective at preventing "influenza-associated medically attended acute respiratory illness". This essentially means that this year's flu vaccines 45% effective at preventing flu-like illness severe enough to warrant a trip to the doctor or hospital. It's still too early to tell what the impact of this year's flu season will have on the population, with the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.