



Can Public-Private Partnerships Help Ensure Healthier Outcomes?

A key, but often overlooked, part of ensuring public health safety during natural disasters is medication adherence. Falling off therapy can have significant negative impact, especially for those patients with chronic conditions. And yet, often during natural disasters, people need to relocate, forget to pack their medications, or misplace or lose them, and have **difficulty getting a refill** to replace them. Patients can also simply run out of medications and not be able to obtain a refill because of road or other hazardous conditions.

This can have lasting impacts, both for the individual and the health care system in general. Ensuring patients have medication on hand, have a way to store them properly, and know where to obtain refills, can make a big public health difference, especially during a natural disaster.

Proactive pharmacy-led outreach prior to a natural disaster led to a 9% increase in patients refilling a medication



Research conducted by the CVS Health Research Institute in partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) shows that, prior to a natural disaster, **proactive outreach through a public-private partnership can help ensure patients have medication on hand** and know where to obtain refills.



What the Study Found

CVS pharmacists reached out to 2.1 million patients with chronic conditions who were customers at more than 600 stores in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Washington, D.C. prior to a forecasted blizzard in the Mid-Atlantic states. This outreach, conducted by phone and text message, resulted in a 9 percent increase in patients refilling a medication compared with those that didn't receive such outreach. It also found that patients whose refill records suggested they had seven days or less worth of medication on hand were generally more likely than the control group to refill a medication. The effect was more notable among patients taking anti-seizure medications.



Significance of the Findings

The partnership between a public agency, HHS, and a private entity with a large national presence, such as CVS Pharmacy, enabled swift outreach to help ensure public health preparedness within communities.

Millions of Americans interact with CVS Health every day. We can act as a community resource in times of natural disaster as well as an easily accessible “hub” for medication assistance. When a disaster is expected, we proactively educate patients about the importance of obtaining their prescriptions and inform them about where to do so.

This study demonstrates our strength in helping ensure that patients have the medications they need to stay healthy. This is particularly important among those for whom medication disruptions can lead to immediate problems, including patients with seizure disorders, on insulin or anti-clotting medications, blood pressure medication, or antipsychotic medications.



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Because our pharmacists have information about how much medication a patient should still have available and when the next refill is due, we are also uniquely positioned to help ensure medication continuity. Using this information, we can identify patients who may be at risk of a medication shortage during a natural disaster.

The study also shows that the ability to engage and connect with patients and customers makes entities like us a valued partner with government – particularly during times of emergency. Public-private partnerships like this one can offer critical support to communities, government officials and first responders, helping with preparedness measures in order to protect the health and safety of citizens.

– **Jonathan C. Roberts**
President, CVS Caremark

Actual results may vary based on factors such as programs adopted by the plan.
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