

Vaccination services in the Norwegian deregulated pharmacy market

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Background:

The pharmacy sector in Norway operates within a deregulated market. There are 1,025 pharmacies, owned by three privately held and vertically integrated pharmacy chains, and 36 state-owned hospital pharmacies, all competing for patients and market share. Despite this competitive environment, there is strong willingness to collaborate on the development of national pharmacy health care services. The Norwegian pharmacy vaccination services serve as a prime example of such collaboration.

Purpose:

To support the governmental vaccination goals and make Norwegian pharmacies a natural provider of vaccination services.

Method:

The Norwegian Pharmacy Association leads a working group dedicated to the development and implementation of vaccination services. This group convenes every 3 to 4 weeks, holding responsibility for both the content and maintenance of these services. The vaccination services adhere strictly to the guidelines provided by the Norwegian Institute for Public Health.

A committee, comprising the professional directors of both the pharmacy chains and the hospital pharmacies, is tasked with approving the vaccination services.

Results:

The working group is responsible for:

- Specifying the necessary competence for vaccinators and prescribers
- Developing training programs for vaccinators and prescribers
- Creating service manuals and procedures
- Deciding which vaccines are included in the vaccination services
- Developing fact sheets for each vaccine offered
- Designing certificates of competence

All resources related to vaccination services are made accessible via an intranet page available to all pharmacies.

In 2017, the first vaccine doses were administered in pharmacies. By, 2024, 94 % of the pharmacies delivered vaccination services, resulting in the administration of a total of 400,000 vaccines. Currently, 40 vaccines, including both live and non-live vaccines, are a part of the vaccination services.

Conclusion:

Since 2017, Norwegian pharmacies have delivered national vaccination services developed by the pharmacy sector itself. This achievement is attributed to the willingness to collaborate despite competitive pressures. Through this initiative, the pharmacy sector ensures that all Norwegian pharmacies deliver vaccination services in a consistent manner, maintaining high-quality standards.