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PIONEERING ADULT IMMUNIZATION AT RAINBOW HOSPITAL

This report details the launch of a pioneering adult immunization initiative at Rainbow Hospital, a first of its kind in India. This initiative, undertaken in partnership with Avenida Innovations and leading pharmaceutical companies including Pfizer, GSK, MSD, Sanofi, and Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, aims to improve adult vaccination rates across the state. Notably, a Pharm.D has been appointed as the adult vaccination officer/counselor, a groundbreaking role in India.

Introduction:

Vaccinations rank among the greatest achievements in modern medicine, saving an estimated 2.5 million lives annually. However, vaccine hesitancy remains a significant global health threat, according to the World Health Organization. This hesitancy, coupled with inaccessibility and a lack of understanding about vaccine benefits, leads to the underutilization of immunization services. As a result, vaccine-preventable diseases persist as a major concern¹.

Historically, vaccinations in India have primarily been associated with children, leading to a prevalent misconception that vaccines are only for the younger population.

However, this initiative highlights a critical aspect of public health that has been largely overlooked- Adult Immunization.

Event launch:

Rainbow Children's Hospital, a trailblazer in pediatric care in India, has introduced AVON- Adult Vaccination Outreach Network, aiming to extend its mission to adult vaccination across the nation. AVON was conceived by Neeraj Dhabhai, with his team member Amal Mohan spearheading its implementation at Rainbow.

In collaboration with Avenida Innovations led by its CEO Dr.Karthik Rakam, AVON's launch on July 28th, 2024 featured panel discussions that emphasized the necessity of adult immunization, protecting Adults from Preventable Diseases; Breaking Down Barriers to Adult Immunization and the challenges associated with vaccine accessibility. The discussions brought to light the importance of extending vaccination efforts beyond childhood, advocating for a life course approach to immunization.

The primary group for this vaccination drive includes those aged 18-45, seniors aged 65 and above, immunocompromised individuals, the general adult population, and healthcare workers.

A pioneering chapter for Pharm.D professionals: A significant innovation in this initiative is the appointment of Pharm.Ds as adult vaccination officers, marking the first time this role of clinical pharmacist led immunization has been established in India. A Pharm D professional brings a wealth of expertise in providing pharmaceutical care services, pharmacology, pharmacotherapy, patient education, and public health, thereby enhancing the program's effectiveness.

The Adult Vaccination Officers (AVOs) are responsible for thorough screening of patients



by assessing medical histories, evaluating potential vaccine interactions, and providing tailored advice to ensure that each patient receives appropriate vaccinations based on their health profile. An essential part of the role involves counselling the patient which is crucial for maximizing the effectiveness and acceptance of adult vaccinations.

Beyond advising and screening, the officers will oversee the administration of vaccines, countersign the vaccination prescriptions, thus maintaining the highest standards of safety and efficacy. Post-vaccination, the AVOs provide follow-up support to monitor for any adverse reactions and ensure that patients complete their vaccination schedules. This aids in optimizing the overall impact of the immunization program.

In collaboration with Avenida Innovations and leading pharmaceutical giants - Pfizer, GSK, MSD, Sanofi, and Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, this initiative is set to revolutionize adult vaccination practices. The vaccination drive encompasses a range of essential vaccines including **PCV Vaccine (Pfizer)**, **Shingles Vaccine (GSK)**, **HPV Vaccine (MSD)** and **Flu Vaccine (Sanofi)**. Together, these vaccines form a comprehensive strategy to enhance adult health and prevent a range of serious diseases. By integrating these critical immunizations into the vaccination drive, the initiative not only addresses immediate health concerns but also promotes long-term wellness and disease prevention among adults.

Conclusion:

Including a Pharm.D as the adult vaccination officer/counselor in the Rainbow Hospital initiative significantly enhances the program's effectiveness. Their expertise ensures the initiative is scientifically sound, patient-centered, and well-managed, setting a new standard for public health programs in India.

This innovative approach can serve as a model for similar initiatives nationwide.



Reference:

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