

Pharmacy Technician Led Service Delivery Improvements for Influenza Vaccine Distribution Across the NT

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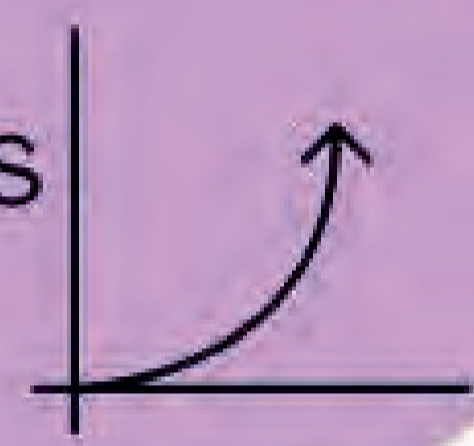
Background The logistics of Northern Territory (NT) Vaccine Distribution is a large and complex operation that has evolved and grown over time. In recent years a number of quality improvement projects have been undertaken regarding influenza vaccine distribution across the NT and recommendations for a vaccine pharmacist coordinator position to assist during the influenza vaccine season was implemented in 2021. In 2023, this role was redesigned to a pharmacy technician position given their expertise in the pharmacy operations and ability to manage external stakeholder relationships. The role was funded for 1 full time equivalent (FTE) for a 6 month period and was split between Darwin (0.5 FTE) and Alice Springs (0.5 FTE) to ensure appropriate coverage across the NT.

Aim To evaluate a pilot trial of pharmacy technicians as the Influenza Vaccine Coordinators (coordinators).

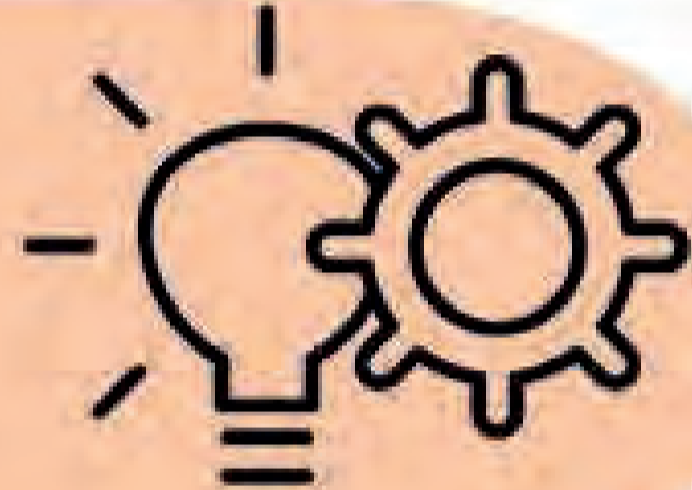
Methods Self reported data was collected in a standardised tool on activities performed by the pharmacy technician co-ordinators during April to August 2023. An evaluation survey was sent to all Vaccine Service Providers (VSPs) and Pharmacy Staff.

Results

NT Hospital pharmacies distributed approximately 45,000 influenza vaccines across the NT



The coordinators received and actioned a total of 279 queries



Operational workload reduced as 79% (n=221) of queries were resolved by the coordinators without referral to alternative staff or department.



84% (n=10) pharmacy respondents and 81% (n=51) of VSPs were satisfied with the 2023 influenza vaccine distribution process compared to previous years.



87% (n=242) of queries were resolved within the same working day



Conclusion Pharmacy technicians are well placed, with their knowledge and expertise in pharmacy service logistics, to assist in coordinating a large scale vaccine distribution process. This has other positive flow on effects by reducing NT Health staff workload and ensuring vaccines are delivered equitably to best suit the needs of vaccine service providers and ultimately improve patient outcomes.