Meridian open house wraps up month-long events for American Pharmacists Month

Students wrapped up their month-long celebration of American Pharmacists Month with an open house at the L.S. Skaggs Pharmacy Complex on Oct. 28, providing more than 40 free seasonal flu vaccinations to members of the community, plus offering other health care services including information on heartburn awareness programs, diabetes education and poison prevention. Each year, student pharmacists at the Pocatello and Meridian campuses hold several events in conjunction with the American Pharmacist Association’s, APhA, annual October celebration.

Student pharmacists at the Pocatello campus held an open house earlier in the month, providing about 50 free immunizations to community members.

This month-long observance is a time to recognize the significant contributions to health care and the commitment to patient care by pharmacists in all practice settings from around the country. “Know Your MEDICINE, Know Your PHARMACIST” is the theme and core message of the month.

Sav-on Pharmacy was the corporate sponsor for the student activities, and provided additional support with immunization clinics at both campuses.

“Thank you to Dr. Debbie Marchetti and Diane Lipsett for coming on campus and helping students with the immunizations,” said Andrew Gauss, coordinator. “The corporate support we receive from the Sav-on and Supervalu Pharmacies makes these events possible.”

In addition to the open house and immunizations, students provided continuing education classes at both campuses, a diabetes fun run/walk and hosted pharmacy recruiters in Pocatello for the annual Pharmacy Recruiting Fair.

More than 80 health care recruiters representing about 50 companies from Idaho and across the United States attended the fair to interview students one-on-one for potential employment.

Idaho State University College of Pharmacy student Steve Broyles administers a flu shot to Meridian Mayor Tammy de Weerd during a Pharmacy Open House and chili fund-raise on Oct. 28.
Pharmacy residents weigh in on danger

Spice: Harmless incense or designer drug?

There has been a lot of news lately about Spice, a trendy drug among adolescents and other users looking for a “legal” marijuana substitute. Spice is a mix of herbs sprayed with compounds that mimic the action of the active ingredient in marijuana, THC. It is sold in a variety of retail settings ranging from gas stations, tattoo parlors, adult stores and is also widely available on the Internet. Although labeled as incense and not intended for human consumption, it is smoked like marijuana to get high. Moreover, commonly used drug tests are not able to detect use of these chemicals.

Originally, Spice was sold in Europe. In 2009, it was discovered that the herbs were sprayed with compounds similar to THC. Therefore, it is the spray and not the herbs that cause the Spice high. One such compound, JWH-081, was synthesized by Dr. John Huffman at Clemson University. He was conducting research on the effects of cannabinoids (marijuana-like compounds) on the brain. In his 1995 paper, Dr. Huffman presented the formula for the compound. This process is thought to be utilized in the production of Spice.

Several countries and U.S. states have already instituted bans on Spice due to its effects similar to THC. Public safety is a concern as these synthetic chemicals have never been studied in humans. In addition, Spice has been associated with side effects such as nausea, vomiting, agitation, high blood pressure and heart rate, seizures and loss of consciousness. Prolonged abuse may cause addiction.

Since the chemicals in Spice differ from THC, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) does not regulate its use. In response to the need for state regulations, the Idaho Board of Pharmacy has temporarily classified Spice as a Schedule I controlled substance. This places it in the same category as heroin, making it a felony to possess or sell Spice. Gov. Butch Otter will sign a ban on the sale of the compound until the Idaho Legislature can address the issue in the upcoming session.

Idaho’s effort to control the sale and use of Spice and minimize the threat it poses to public health is a step in the right direction.

Michael Biddle, Pharm.D., and Kim Van Wyk, Pharm.D. are pharmacy residents with the Idaho State University Family Medicine Clinic.

Take Time to Join Us: College of Pharmacy & ISU Events

- November 6, 2010, 10:30 am, Football, ISU vs. University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia.
- November 17, 2010, 6-10:00 p.m., Student Recruitment Fair, The Grove Hotel-Boise, Idaho.
- January 27, 2011, 5:00 p.m., ISU Legislative Reception, Evergreen room, The Grove Hotel-Boise, Idaho.

For more information regarding pharmacy events, contact Andrew Gauss at 282-3393 or andrew@pharmacy.isu.edu