

TELL ME WHERE TO GET MY FLU SHOT

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From a public health perspective, the flu vaccination rate is viewed as too low in many countries. Based on two large linked randomized control trials, we test whether the vaccination rate can be increased by a letter informing consumers about a new access to the flu shot in a pharmacy. We find that receiving the letter increases the immunization rate by 2.5%-points (15%) with significant provider substitution for people vaccinated in the previous year. Specifically indicating the nearest pharmacy on the letter increases the vaccination rate in the pharmacy by 24.3% and the overall immunization rate by roughly 10% (compared to the letter without information on the nearest pharmacy). Consumers tend to stick to the indicated pharmacy even if a closer one becomes available. In addition, individuals who received the letter in two following flu seasons are almost four times more likely to receive a flu shot in a pharmacy in the second season than their peers who received the letter only in the first season. However, the reminder is not successful in further increasing the overall immunization rate.