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Second Walmart Vaccine Clinic Focuses on Boosters

Kali Herbst Minino and Ashley Hagar, News Editors

The Walmart Flu and COVID-19 vaccine clinic returned for a follow-up clinic Oct. 27 after hosting an initial clinic in the Oberto Commons in the Sinegal Center Oct. 5 and 6. The clinic administered Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines and flu shots.

In a written response to The Spectator, Tara Hicks, the director of the Student Health Center, explained that the second clinic's focus would be primarily COVID-19 vaccinations. After the initial clinic three weeks ago offered flu shots and COVID-19 vaccinations, the clinic Oct. 27 focused more on giving out booster shots.

"Last time our focus was on those students who did not have access to the vaccine in the community they lived prior to coming to Seattle U for fall term," Hicks wrote.

The emphasis on COVID-19 booster shots was a success. Tina Sharma, the Pharmacy Clinical Services Manager for Walmart region 60 encompassing Washington, Idaho, Alaska, Hawaii and Oregon, mentioned that the turnout for the booster shot was much higher than the last clinic, which she also worked at.

"I think the news is out there. People are eligible, they're coming in," Sharma said. "If we can make that difference, it means a lot."

The clinic arrived at the university seven days after the CDC expanded eligibility for COVID-19 booster shots. Eligibility for COVID-19 boosters is dependent on which vaccination someone initially received.

For those who received Pfizer or Moderna, someone must have received their two doses of COVID-19 vaccination six months prior to getting a booster shot. In addition to these time restraints, individuals either need to be 65 years old, live in long term care settings, have underlying medical conditions or be in a high-risk setting to receive a booster shot.

However, those that received Johnson & Johnson originally are eligible for a booster dose just two months after their initial shot. Anyone who received Johnson & Johnson two months ago and is 18 years or older can receive a booster dose.

Many of these qualifications may not seemingly apply to students, but some found that they were eligible for a booster shot by living in the dorms or working on campus.

Fiona Griffiths Boston, a second-year public affairs and philosophy double major, got her COVID-19 booster shot as she was eligible being a Seattle U resident.



Jordie Simpson

“I wanted my booster, but I honestly didn’t think I was eligible just because I don’t have any underlying health conditions and I also was like, ‘I’m not in a risk group as far as my workplace or anything,’” Griffiths Boston said.

A second major change recently made to the CDC recommendations is the authorization of mixing booster doses. This means that people eligible for booster vaccines can receive any booster available to them.

Despite the Walmart clinic only offering Pfizer vaccinations, Seattle U community members that had previously received Moderna or Johnson & Johnson were still able to receive a booster dose at the clinic this week.

At first, Griffiths Boston was hesitant to get her booster shot at the Walmart Clinic.

“I was waiting for it to become readily available. I didn’t honestly realize that the COVID clinic on campus was doing it just for students who lived in the dorms or in the apartments,” Griffiths Boston said. “I initially just went there to get my flu shot.”

Now that booster eligibility has expanded based on the initial shot someone received, more students have become eligible and are looking to receive their booster vaccinations.