

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini Interview

Director of Nursing Excellence and Magnet Program Director, University of Illinois Hospital & Health Science System

Tuesday, December 6, 2022 12:27PM • 22:52

SPEAKERS

Michael Wesbecher, Kimberly (Kim) Bertini, Jenna Courtade, Jessie Knoles, Bethany Anderson

Jenna Courtade 00:00

At a later time [illegible] an interview agreement form just to do it all by the- cause we're like we're collecting oral histories for this project that's part of it. So just for the context. Thank you. So just for the recording, I'm Jenna Courtade and we're here at UIC [University of Illinois Chicago] on December sixth 2022.

Bethany Anderson 00:36

So I'm Bethany Anderson, and I'm the Natural Applied Sciences Archivist in the University of Illinois Archives.

Jessie Knoles 00:42

And I'm Jessie Knoles, an academic hourly researcher on the COVID project. Kim to start, I guess we would just like for you to briefly go over your role with the vaccine project and the Credit Union 1 arena, and how does that all sort of actualized.

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 01:03

Sure. So I'm Kimberly Bertini, and I am the Director of Nursing Excellence and Magnet Program director for UI [University of Illinois] Health. So we actually presented a PowerPoint for Sigma Theta Tau. So I don't know if that would help you as well, I'd be more than happy to share that with you. It has all of our timelines. And I don't know how much time you have right now, if you want me to share my screen and show it to you, or just orally go through it.

Jenna Courtade 01:36

If you were interested in like, donating that we could like, have it a digital copy of it. Um, if you wanted to, but I-

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 01:47

You don't need it. Okay. So-

Jenna Courtade 01:50

Going through, it would be good too.

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 01:51

Sure. So really, this all started on November 25, 2020. So that was the day I believe it was the day before Thanksgiving. We basically knew at this point, the vaccine would be coming to Chicago, it was going to get its [EAU Emergency Authorization Use?]. Up until this point, you know, they really didn't talk much about it. They talked about one being made. But they hadn't given any EAU information, whether it was gonna be in 2020, 2021, a month, a day, a time, we had no idea. So it wasn't until really the 24th, 25th that information started coming down. And it was leaking, that it was going to be made available sometime hopefully before the new year. So on November 25, 2020, myself and Paul Gorski [Health Care Administrator at UI Hospital], were identified to be operational leaders, to figure out first how to get vaccinations equitably and swiftly to hospital personnel, and what that would look like. So we were asked to take on that project on the 25th. The 26th was Thanksgiving. And then the 27th, we basically had our first meeting and, you know, just started our gathering of information phase, and doing the research that we needed to do. What's really funny is out in the world when all of this started coming out on the 24th and the 25th. That's when the CDU [Clinical Decision Unit?] and Illinois Department of Public Health [IDPH] started working on educational documents for healthcare providers on equitable disbursement of the vaccine. So, really just meeting with them. We met with the CDC [Center for Disease Control and Prevention] twice a day starting on the 30th. And then also IDPH, once a week, starting pretty much that week as well, getting some of the information and the tools that we were going to need. The very first site location was on campus on the West Campus. And we were able to use the pharmacy concourse level. So I don't know if you've ever been in the Pharmacy building but it's actually attached to the hospital.

Jenna Courtade 04:36

So we just there.

Michael Wesbecher 04:38

We just bought from there. So they just saw that whole space. Yeah.

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 04:43

So once we were able to set up that space, then we had Becky [Rebecca] Mischak. She's in charge of UHS so University Health Services. So Becky has a wealth of knowledge when it comes to delivering mass flu vaccinations. She's been doing this for years. And she always she always took the opportunity when it was flu season and flu vaccination season to treat it as a mass vaccination drill. So she already had all those time and motion studies done and she [has] given out 5000 vaccines in one day. So we knew once we identified that that basement area in the Pharmacy building, just turn it over to Becky's team and let them do their magic. And that's what they did. So we went back to the drawing board as to how we're going to disperse the vaccine. So using, I want to make sure I'm giving you the right words. So really using the phase one, jumpstart from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention social vulnerability index tool, we knew we basically had an idea or at least an outline of where we should start giving vaccines. So you know, there's some gray area there, because everyone is focusing on the healthcare workers and the healthcare providers. And there wasn't a lot of thought given to the ancillary staff who are supporting, like the ICU [Intensive Care Unit] people and the people who are taking care of the COVID 19 patients. So we wanted to make sure that we were being very thoughtful with that. So we actually held a two hour meeting, which included ethics, and a couple of people from the university, a couple of people from the hospital, including Dr. Bleasdale, Dr. Lin, so you know, some of the

epidemiologists and physicians that we have on staff to really make sure that we were being very thoughtful. So when we started tiering our own staff, it wasn't done by title, it was done by role and exposure. We also had a partner with IS [Information Services] because we wanted to make it as easy and seamless to sign up for the vaccine. But not only that, we had to trace who we were giving it to in the electronic health record because all of these doses had to be put into the Illinois Department of Public Health vaccine finder. So the fact that we had already gone live with Epic that really helped. So working with IS then we turned over the tier system that we created to IS, and they attach that by ID number. So your UIN [University Identification Number] number you have on the back of your ID as well. So we release batches of UIN numbers for them to systematically release appointments for them to say it was okay to come and get their vaccine. We had thought that it was going to be anywhere between like a six and a nine day tier progression. However, we were able to do it so swiftly it became like a two and a three day tier progression for us. So that the more vaccine that we were getting out, and the more that we were recording it and turning it back into IDPH, the more they were actually giving to us at one point, the Illinois Department of Public Health well really it was the Chicago Department of Public Health because even though we're the state hospital, you know, we sit in the middle of Chicago, so we were actually getting our doses through Lori Lightfoot [Mayor of Chicago] not through the governor. Because we were able to not only deliver the vaccine at the rate, we were delivering it because we were delivering it basically 24 hours a day. We had 24 hour staff. They were sending us more vaccine. So we got through our entire hospital. When other hospitals were really just, you know, not through their COVID caregivers yet. So when we said we want to move on to the next phase, we were told absolutely not the state's moving on in phases together. And if we were that far along, then we can start helping the rest of the state. So that's how then we got the Illinois Police Department, some of the fire departments some of the Chicago Police Department and fire departments. Illinois Department of Public Health, they have some onsite labs by us on you at UIC over on East Campus and West Campus. So we started vaccinating. Yeah, Illinois Department of Public Health who was actually giving us the vaccine. I always thought that was sort of comical. Um, and so this this was going so well, you know, we knew the next step was going to come very quickly for you know, opening it up to the public. So, you know, Paul and I sat back and we went back to the drawing board and we're like, alright, we need in a much larger space than, you know, our space down here in the basement, and we wanted to make sure that we continue to that space for essential workers because we had more and more essential workers who were finding their way to us. So we wanted to make sure that that stayed an essential worker space, and it wasn't for the public space. So in a meeting with executive sponsors, which was at this point, Dr. Barish, Mike Zenn, Susan Bleasdale. And it a couple of other people that I'm just blanking on who was there. They said, You know, we have Credit Union 1. Why don't you reach out to Kevin Scheibler, Credit Union 1 not only is not being used, because of course, everything was shut down. But they had some workers that were actually furloughed. So if we were able to open up Credit Union 1, again, we could bring some of those workers back off furlough, we would have a mass vaccination site and the site was so large, we knew that we were at our max of doses that Chicago Department of Public Health could give us, which was basically 2000 doses a day. But we had enough space and operational bandwidth to do anywhere between four and 6000 doses a day. So we knew if needed, we could open it up to rush Northwestern and partner, you know, with maybe the Illinois Medical District to bring in more people if needed. So that was let me go back to my timeline. So we got the site for Credit Union 1, December 10. So I know, it seems like a lot was done. But we just started on November 25. And now this is December 10. We found the site for Credit Union 1. Then we started

working over there. So again, we had to get our IS team. They had to go over to Credit Union 1 while they're still UI Health. They're not on our internet, they're not on our internet site. They don't have Epic over there. So you know, we're not on the same Wi Fi. So we had to get our team over there to set all of that up. So we set up 18 vaccination stations. We set up seven check in registration stations. And we had one consultation station where there is an APRN [Advanced Practice Registered Nurses] staffed at all times. In case there's any questions that people had. So phase one was check in, phase two was vaccination, and then phase three is where people would sit and wait for the 15 to 30 minutes post looking for any reactions. So in phase one, we had Wayfinding staff so that was basically the Credit Union 1 arena staff. So they worked as Wayfinders and security at the site. We had CSR or customer service representatives from the hospital who were actually checking in patients because again, we brought Epic to Credit Union 1. So they would have their medical record numbers they could download, you know their vaccination cards, it would be in their chart. And we had that APRN staffed there. In phase two, we had 18 vaccinators. Most of the vaccine is as you may or may not know came from our College of Nursing, College of Pharmacy, College of Medicine, and College of Dentistry. So they're all students. So we also had to have faculty from those colleges who were there to oversee them. And then we had what we called a phase two manager who sat there for any operational issues. In phase three, we also utilize students to monitor patients and answer questions and later on in this process, and deliver other sorts of education because we realized we sort of had a captive audience for at least 15 to 30 minutes. And honestly people didn't want to leave it was the first time they were coming out and like one to two years. So you know you would think people wouldn't want to sit for 15 to 30 minutes to be monitored, but we actually had to move people along and we waited until like a 45 minute mark to start moving people along. But also in that phase three section. We had a ACLS [Advanced Cardiac Life Support] ambulance and ambulance crew there for the entire time the vaccination clinic was open. We ended up having three transports back to the hospital. None of them are vaccine related. There were all other medical conditions related.

Jenna Courtade 15:16

Kim can I ask a few just like abbreviation questions?

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 15:21

Sure.

Jenna Courtade 15:22

So what is IS stands for? I'm sorry if I missed that.

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 15:25

Oh, sorry, Information Services.

Jenna Courtade 15:27

Okay. And APR- [illegible]. And, um, what about APRN?

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 15:37

Advanced Practice Registered Nurse. So advanced practice registered nurses, can they're providers. They're while they're nurses, they still act as providers. So think about nurse practitioners.

Jenna Courtade 15:47

Okay. Those were my two. Just for the record-

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 15:52

Sure.

Jenna Courtade 15:53

Thank you.

Jessie Knoles 15:55

That's great. Yeah, I think that that covers a lot.

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 16:01

So important day, it's November 25, the team was identified. The 27th we had our first leadership meeting. The 30th, the November 30, was the big team meeting. We delivered our first Pfizer vaccine on December 18, down in the pharmacy. And then probably another thing it's important to point out on January 29, that was the Friday before we are allowed to move on to that mass vaccination phase. We had a live dress rehearsal. So we took 70 vaccines and we took 70 volunteers that were willing to go through the whole process as a as a live dress rehearsal. Um, now remember, we had been doing this since December 18th. At the hospital, so it's just at the new site, what do we have to move and we ended up moving like printers and a couple of other things based on this live dress rehearsal. So those 70 volunteers were people that were fitting into that next phase. So they were identified as the high risk. And it was it was pretty much family members or patients that we had at the hospital that were able to very quickly verify that they would have been what they were willing to be a volunteer on that Friday before we went live on Monday, February 1.

Jenna Courtade 17:44

And this is another question I have. So the credit one, credit one, credit union one-

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 17:52

Credit Union 1 arena,

Jenna Courtade 17:54

Credit Union 1 arena, staff that was helping, did they also get like vaccinated before? Okay.

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 18:04

Yes. And also, so did any of the vaccinators. So any of the vaccinators who maybe weren't fitting in? So you know, at that time, some students were not in clinicals at all. So they didn't get put through that initial phase, when we were doing it only at the hospital. But when they were working then a Credit Union 1 and they were working with the mass population. If they wanted, it was it was voluntary, it was not mandatory at that point. They could volunteer to get the vaccine.

Jenna Courtade 18:44

Okay. Thank you.

Jessie Knoles 18:47

And real quick, how long was the Credit Union 1 arena used as a vaccination station?

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 18:54

So we opened up February. When did we close it? Did we close it in July? It might- I would have to follow up and give you an exact date. And once it was up and running, and those pod managers were, you know, doing what they were doing. I was able to step away and move on to other projects. So I didn't stay with the project once we got it up and running.

Jessie Knoles 19:21

Okay, great.

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 19:23

And then when we close it down, we actually we close it down, but we just made it smaller. So we moved it back on campus, and we moved it to our EEI building. That's the Ear & Eye Infirmary. So the first floor of the Ear & Eye Infirmary, we have an auditorium that most of it is unusable. But there's a pretty good section of it that we were able to use, and they moved it over there and they moved it to four vaccination stations and our recovery room.

Jessie Knoles 19:52

Great, thank you.

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 19:56

And that's still up and running.

Jessie Knoles 20:00

Okay. I think I think we're good. Yeah. Yeah.

Jenna Courtade 20:07

So, um, we we can, we'll reach out to you probably in a few days time. And just some send an interview agreement form. And if you're interested in also sharing that PowerPoint, we would like to have that if you're interested. And so we can like communicate that in the email. Yeah.

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 20:31

Sure. Sure. Yep. Using using all the volunteer faculty, and then the students, we estimated a cost savings of nearly \$800,000 in the delivery of the vaccine.

Michael Wesbecher 20:48

Hey, Kim, this is Michael, again, do you have off the top of your head like a number of individuals that received our vaccine at like through the mass vaccination site event?

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 21:02

Sure. So I can tell you the total number of vaccines given through April 6 of 2022 was a little over 180,000.

Jessie Knoles 21:12

Great.

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 21:12

So that included not just the vaccination clinic that included the vaccination clinic at UI Health, but also then all of our community outreach, because again, we partnered with our mile square locations, and with the city of Chicago, and we did the Protect Chicago plus pop up clinics, that included all of those clinics as well. And then to our Strike team. We had a strike team that went out and that was basically some advanced practice nurses and some social workers, and they went to homeless camps at this point. They went to homeless shelters and then women and family shelters as well to deliver vaccine through the Strike team initiative.

Jessie Knoles 22:18

Thank you for meeting with us Kim.

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 22:20

You're welcome.

Michael Wesbecher 22:21

And we're going to be off shortly to Credit Union 1 arena. This was a perfect precursor for what they're going to be seeing next and actually, for what we saw in the College of Pharmacy, so it was it was a great context. Yeah.

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 22:33

Perfect.

Michael Wesbecher 22:34

Thank you so much.

Kimberly (Kim) Bertini 22:35

Sure. If you think of any other questions you have, once you go through Credit Union 1, feel free to reach out Michael has all my contact information.