



Beyond Borders: Cold Supply Storage and Shipping Saves Lives in Laos

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), influenza epidemics severely sicken upwards of five million people around the world annually and between 250,000 and 500,000 people die of the viral infection. In the U.S., people are easily able to get flu vaccinations at their doctors' office or local drug store. However poor countries around the globe lack access to flu vaccines. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the pharmacy chain Walgreens partnered to transfer unused flu vaccine drugs from the U.S. to poor countries in need, instead of destroying the potentially lifesaving drugs as required if not used. Although Walgreens wanted to donate its surplus to the country of Laos, it required specialized supply chain logistics and technological solutions to overcome several challenges including:

- **distance** – the medication had to be shipped from Kentucky to the capital of Laos, a distance of more than 8,400 miles
- **timing** – the medicine would have to arrive in Laos within the critical window of time immediately before the flu usually strikes
- **temperature** – the medicine had to remain at a temperature of between 35.6 degrees and 46.4 degrees Fahrenheit at all times or it would go bad

The CDC and Walgreens used UPS' technologically-advanced "Temperature True service" to deliver the medicine in temperature-controlled containers directly to the doors of the Laotian Health Ministry. The containers have high-tech environmental sensors and GPS/GSM communications capabilities to ensure that the medicine is kept at the right temperature and is being moved to the right place.

To date, the program has provided critically-needed flu vaccine medication to Laos, Nicaragua, Uganda and is helping those countries avoid potential pandemics.

Sources:

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