

MedEssist's multilingual, user-friendly platform helps local pharmacies prepare for COVID-19 vaccine rollout

Digital Main Street Lab Project Delivers Local Impact to Independent Pharmacists

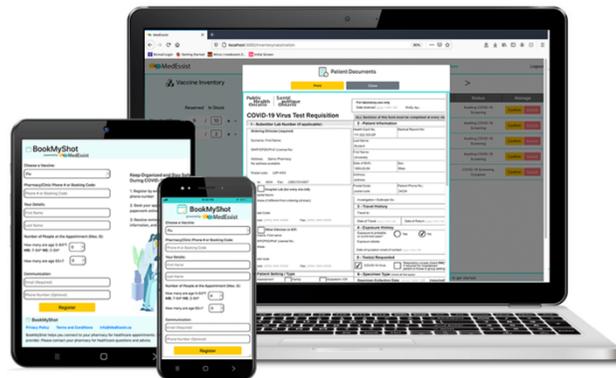
The **Patient Relationship Management** platform for pharmacists

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Same Day Setup for COVID-19 Vaccines*

Background:

MedEssist was founded in 2018 by Pharmacist Michael Do, CEO and Joella Almeida, COO. Their mission is to improve the everyday health of patients by empowering them to access, understand and manage their health and by enabling local pharmacies to serve as proactive healthcare hubs for their communities. Offering two platforms (MedEssist.ca for pharmacies and BookMyShot.com for patients), they focus on supporting community pharmacies with a digital platform that helps them manage and coordinate medication refills, vaccinations, COVID-19 testing and more.

Digital Main Street Future Proof Program:

MedEssist learned of the opportunity to participate in the Digital Main Street (DMS) Future Proof program through consultations organized by RIC Centre in the fall of 2020. The virtual workshops were designed to bring technology innovators together with main street businesses and community groups to develop projects that could help accelerate digital transformation to help small businesses respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. MedEssist applied for the [DMS Lab program](#) and were selected in December 2020 to pilot their solution to a group of independent pharmacies in Peel region.

At the time, Pam Banks, Executive Director of the RIC Centre, noted: *"The RIC Centre is pleased to provide support and mentorship services to our client, MedEssist, as they develop their technology platform and field test new features to help prepare small, independent pharmacies to participate efficiently in COVID-19 vaccine distribution."*

Key Goals:

The scope of work for the pilot project included the following:

- **COVID-19 Vaccine Preparation:** Upgrade existing flu vaccine platform to manage 2-dose scheduling and enable triage by patient age and other risk factors
- **Multi-lingual access:** Expand accessibility by ensuring patient documentation is available in multiple languages dominant to Peel Region

- **Training:** Create training videos to help pharmacists and staff prepare for COVID-19 vaccine distribution
- **Capacity to Scale:** Design reports and update marketing, training and on-boarding materials to improve efficiency of operations.

Impact:

"We appreciate that by participating in the MedEssist Digital Main Street pilot project, we were able to start building our COVID vaccine patient wait lists early on. Going forward, we will confidently manage all communication, scheduling, and documentation for all of our patients, including those who are not tech-savvy and those who have language barriers." - Apple Hills Medical Pharmacy

"We are pleased that our members in the Peel Region received this support through Digital Main Street Lab and MedEssist. The independent pharmacy owners in our network are confidently prepared and well-positioned to serve their communities during the COVID-19 vaccine rollout." - Sherif Guorgui, Co-CEO/Chief Strategy, Stakeholder and Government Relations, OnPharm-United

Key Accomplishments:

During the DMS Lab pilot test, the MedEssist team achieved remarkable results:

- Onboarded 30 pharmacies in Peel region despite digital hesitancy and lack of information about compensation for clinical services (e.g. unclear who would be paying for PPE, costs incurred in giving vaccines, etc.)
- Increased accessibility beyond English and French by providing interactive patient documentation in six additional languages: Polish, Vietnamese, Korean, Simplified Chinese, Hindi and Farsi
- Enabled smart patient triaging to the platform to help pharmacies to easily identify high-risk patients with comorbidities and to match inventory of vaccines with the appropriate patients
- Added digital employee screening for COVID symptoms to comply with provincial mandates for pharmacies to log staff at the beginning of each shift

The DMS Lab pilot project has delivered impact far beyond Peel Region as MedEssist recently announced the signing of two agreements with the Ontario Pharmacists Association and PharmaChoice/RxHealthMed to make their platform available to member pharmacies across Canada.

According to Joella Almeida, *"Our ability to close these agreements and ramp up so quickly was due to the massive advancements we were able to make to our platform this winter thanks to DMS Lab funding."*

Project Sponsors:

This [Digital Main Street Future Proof](#) project was made possible through financial support from the Government of Canada through FedDev Ontario's Regional Relief and Recovery Fund.

About FedDev Ontario:

For more than 10 years, [FedDev Ontario](#) has worked to advance and diversify the southern Ontario economy through funding opportunities and business services that support innovation and growth in Canada's most populous region.

About Digital Main Street:

[Digital Main Street](#) was created by the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA)

with direct support from the City of Toronto. DMS is also supported by a group of strategic business partners, including Google, Mastercard, Shopify, Microsoft, Facebook, Intuit QuickBooks, Square, Yellow Pages and Lightspeed.

A \$42.5-million investment from [FedDev Ontario](#) brought together the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas, Communitech, Invest Ottawa and the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association to expand the Digital Main Street Platform in order to support more businesses going digital as a response to the impacts of COVID-19 in Southern Ontario.

About RIC Centre:

[RIC Centre](#), a not-for-profit innovation hub and business incubator serving the Peel Region and Southern Ontario, was selected as the delivery partner for the DMS Future Proof Program for Peel Region. RIC Centre's focus is to be a dynamic catalyst for tech companies. The team consists of more than 100 expert advisors, industry, academic and government partners. RIC Centre helps companies in Advanced Manufacturing, Internet of Things, Hardware & Software, Cleantech and Life Sciences to commercialize their products and get them to market faster.