

Credit Union1 Arena Interview

Tuesday, December 13, 2022 12:27PM • 19:56

Kevin Scheibler, Executive Director, UIC Pavilion and Campus Event Services

Matt Liskh, Deputy Director, UIC Pavilion and Campus Event Services

SPEAKERS

Kevin Scheibler, Michael Wesbecher, Jenna Courtade, Matt Liskh, Bethany Anderson, Jessie Knoles

Kevin Scheibler 00:00

[Interview took place while walking around the Credit Union 1 Arena on the Eastside of the University of Illinois Chicago's campus] We're getting ready for commencement this weekend. [Referring to the red carpeting that was on the lower floor of the arena] Normally we don't have a red floor. [Laughter from group.]

Jenna Courtade 00:07

It's fancy.

Michael Wesbecher 00:08

I don't know if we mentioned when we were speaking with Kim [Kimberly Bertini], this was the first mass vaccination site in the city of Chicago. Just as a point of context.

Kevin Scheibler 00:29

Kind of at our peak we were doing I think-- Kim and them would know better-- But I want to say we were doing like 2,500 a day.

Jenna Courtade 00:38

Yeah, she mentioned like getting 2,000 vials or like, batches, doses. At some point, like that was the limit that they were allowed to receive.

Kevin Scheibler 00:54

Yeah, it was funny cause like, May, it was like one day in May. It was on a Friday, we had just the biggest day we ever had. And then that Monday, there was nobody.

Jenna Courtade 01:04

Woah!

Kevin Scheibler 01:05

It was just like [snap], stop.

Jenna Courtade 01:08

That's interesting.

Kevin Scheibler 01:09

[Standing near the Gate Two area] So, we brought everybody in here. This is what we call Gate Two. And we had the temperature readers lined up here. We had some security here to keep out the riffraff whatever. So they all came in here. I mean, we lined them up this way. [The Credit Union 1 Arena has a central ring surrounding the seats and main floor. Guy is gesturing to the circular pathway.] And just kind of went all the way around to where we were. So they weren't ever crossing paths. Everybody was going in the same direction. At the peak, we had queues going up and down this hallway. I think we went down and back. Just to keep, you know, everybody was six feet apart.

Michael Wesbecher 02:03

The queue went from, like there, to there.

Matt Liskh 02:05

We had stanchions set up so it was like a snake.

Kevin Scheibler 02:10

It went down, back, back up. Then they would come around this corner into this lobby here. And this is where we had the registration tables setup. We would come down here and again, and we had this kind of a serpentine kind of, you know, Disney World kind of setup down here. And then we had six, or eight, tables?

Matt Liskh 02:44

Probably about eight tables checking people in.

Kevin Scheibler 02:47

So about eight computers set up here staffed with temporary people. Checked everybody in, gave them their card. I can't remember what else, I think they just gave the card and their information. And then they got into another line up here. Kind of went back and forth.

Michael Wesbecher 03:12

And where were the stations for your next..?

Kevin Scheibler 03:16

They're up here. Then we had the—

Matt Liskh 03:20

We would stop them right about here.

Kevin Scheibler 03:22

We had this blocked off and we had piping draped across here. They would stand here and then we had 16 stations wrapped around the corner. And we had runners that would go back and forth and just come up there with that. They had a person here that was kind of the gatekeeper and they would say

send the next one to station 15, 14. And then they would go down and it was on both sides. But 16 stations with everything they needed. The person would sit down at the station, go over everything, get the shot, and then go to the waiting area.

Kevin Scheibler 03:22

There were either chairs or they could wait in these seats.

Jenna Courtade 04:09

Okay. Yeah, I was just about to ask—

Matt Liskh 04:12

And we had the basketball court down, so they weren't, like, just looking at a blank floor there.

Jenna Courtade 04:19

This is helpful, because I personally thought that it was like done down here. [general recognition that Jenna was referring to the lower floor] Yeah.

Kevin Scheibler 04:26

No, we talked about that. But we didn't want anybody...we didn't want to have to walk up and down the stairs.

Jenna Courtade 04:31

Yeah, and the way that this building is like, laid out, it really does like serve for feeding people, which is useful.

Matt Liskh 04:40

So then this here was the general—

Kevin Scheibler 04:45

—if you didn't have an allergy, or you know, this was like, do I think it was what 20 minutes? Or 15 minutes? And then there were 30 minute. So this was just the general area, then at the end, we put all the other people that we thought might have a concern.

Jenna Courtade 05:02

Yeah.

Kevin Scheibler 05:04

Then once—there was timers throughout here—once their time was out, they left through Gate 4.

Matt Liskh 05:11

And they were done.

Michael Wesbecher 05:14

And people are waiting...were they mostly waiting down here..? Or were they both...—

Kevin Scheibler 05:18

--They were intermixed. I mean...

Jenna Courtade 05:19

—There were seats up here?—

Kevin Scheibler 05:20

—Nobody really wanted to sit next to each other, right?

Michael Wesbecher 05:22

Right right right.

Matt Liskh 05:22

So they were kind of all spread out.

Matt Liskh 05:24

But the waiting area was generally....around here.

Matt Liskh 05:30

We had chairs through here. And we also had...

Kevin Scheibler 05:32

Yeah, like Matt said, the basketball floor was down during the winter months. The basketball team was practicing. Sometimes they had games, because that was...there was no spectators allowed, so they were playing games at like two o'clock in the afternoon on a Friday. So people could at least see something.

Michael Wesbecher 05:50

Yeah.

Bethany Anderson 05:51

Be entertained while they're waiting [group laughs].

Jenna Courtade 05:52

Would it be at the same time, like, they'd be playing while people were getting...?

Kevin Scheibler 05:58

Yeah.

Jenna Courtade 05:58

Oh, wow.

Kevin Scheibler 05:59

So toward the end of it, though, we had to...their league didn't allow spectators. So we had to shut down the seating area, close the drapes, and not let anybody...they could hear the game, but they can't see it.

Jenna Courtade 06:13

I see.

Kevin Scheibler 06:14

I think that was only one or two games that that happened. But yeah, it was...we were open five days a week from...I think we started the first week of February and went through July?

Matt Liskh 06:35

Mid-July.

Michael Wesbecher 06:36

Can you talk a little bit--when you were setting up the planning with like Paul or Kim or anyone else-- what kind of things did you encounter? Did you encounter any other challenges? Was everything just smooth sailing? You know how, what kind of things—

Kevin Scheibler 06:51

—Not from our end. It was, everything from our end was fairly smooth, because, you know, that's what our business is.

Jenna Courtade 06:59

Yeah.

Kevin Scheibler 06:59

Getting people in and out safely and efficiently. I know there were some medical issues, you know, on their end, I don't know what, I don't remember what those were, but just the logistics of getting this many doses over here and finding the staff to deal with, and all that kind of stuff. I know that posed some challenges, but we were just happy to have people in the building to be honest with you. And we're, we're event people, you know we want events. And this, we looked at this as an event. The only other thing we did do, I just remembered is, the mixing location where they mixed the vials and got everything, that was done on the main floor. So kind of away from everybody. I don't remember any...

Michael Wesbecher 07:42

Can you reflect a little bit about what your experience was, even personally, because I've heard from lots of people, like--and I've been at the University—I don't know how long either of you have been at the University—but I've been at the University about 14-15 years—and I felt like this was such a galvanizing moment that a lot of people from across not only just pharmacy and medicine, but security, Credit Union 1 Arena, we've—I felt, and I think others probably felt like this was a very collaborative approach. And that it was leveraging all of our kind of collective energy in a really good way.

Kevin Scheibler 08:24

I mean, it was definitely collaborating everybody's experience or expertise into one event. You know, that's pretty unusual around here that we have so many different people involved with one event, that have a major role in that one event, right, or this one activity. But from our perspective, just watching the people come in, and seeing grandparents that were so excited to be able to see their grandkids again, or hold their grandkids or see their sons or daughters...because most of the people at the beginning that we had in here were elderly people that we were almost a year into the pandemic before--we were 11 months in before we started giving shots—so for 11 months, some of these people didn't see their families, go to church, go have dinner with their friends, anything, so to be able to see the excitement on their faces, especially when they got to this part, and they were done and wasn't as bad as they thought it was gonna be, and they could see that life was gonna get back to normal. That was...and then when they came back for the second time, you know, it was nice. It was, you know, we did a lot of elderly people, and it was pretty moving to see them in here. So.

Jenna Courtade 09:44

And I think Dr. Barish, when we first talked about this whole setup, mentioned that you know, like, it's the middle of, tail end of winter, but to be able to come inside and handle this rather than doing like, dr—because I'm personally from South Florida and that's...everything was just drive through and outside because it was like, we don't want to be in the same space, but to have so much space and use it, and then keep people warm and not out there...different challenges.

Kevin Scheibler 10:21

The United Center was doing something similar, you know, they're only a few blocks away. And theirs was drive-thru, you had to drive through in your car. They had people in lines outside all day. And that was the one thing. That's the way we designed it, or why we designed it the way we did, so that there wouldn't be anybody waiting outside. And we never had a line outside. So that was beneficial and that was great. And, you know, the only issue I think, you know, some people had to wait in line for about an hour at the peak of it. And you know, we're talking a lot of elderly people. But we were able to get them chairs. We have ample wheelchairs here. So if people, you know, if it looked like there was an issue, we got them a wheelchair and let him sit down through it. So I think this was an ideal location, because it was all street level. And no stairs whatsoever. So it was good. And, you know, the hospital's clientele is...I don't know what the total is...but a lot of elderly people came through here. And I think this layout made that easier for them.

Jenna Courtade 10:39

Yeah.

Michael Wesbecher 11:29

Can you guys talk a little bit—you've touched upon it a little bit--about, like the daily shipments, basically, arrival of vaccines every day that were coming over from [UIC] Pharmacy. I know that, like, the police department was usually escorting them a little bit, too. What was that process like every day, kind of like, a day in the life, or I mean, did you—I know you all probably weren't there a lot. But can you speak to that at all? Like, where would they go, what would they do?

Kevin Scheibler 12:04

They were set up down underneath the scoreboard. And I believe—you can step down, there's a stage there right now, but—I believe they would just drive down the loading dock and unload where that door is and bring them into their storage area. They had their refrigerators and everything back there. It was a pretty seamless operation, as far as I could tell. Again, we didn't have a whole lot to do with that. At the beginning, you're right, they did have a police escort. I don't know if that continued the whole way through, but I know at the beginning they did. You know, we never, as far as I know, we never had an issue with the doses not getting here or not having enough or whatever. It seemed like, you know, whatever appointments they made, they were able to service everybody.

Jenna Courtade 13:07

Yeah.

Michael Wesbecher 13:08

And we have lots of photos, just so you know, of like, the prep area where them do—with the College of Pharmacy folks—doing prep down there and kind of—how that setup was a little bit just, to give a flavor of that as well.

Jenna Courtade 13:20

Yeah, we would love those.

Bethany Anderson 13:24

I'm curious, so, in terms of like, number of staffing, how many staff members were kind of supporting this operation?

Kevin Scheibler 13:32

So we had at the peak, just from our staff, we had probably 10 a day...on site, just managing—we basically did everything from that, that check-in point forward. So that would include our staff, our full-time staff, our part time staff, and our security. And like I said they had about 16 stations—I think it was 16 stations through here—each one of them at the peak had I think two people stationed at it or something like that. And then they had a couple runners. They had two or three people back here and I'm not sure what they had downstairs. So it was, at the peak, it was a pretty robust staff. And then as—

Matt Liskh 14:24

—And we had all of our staff working, too, like even, like, sound room. There's no events for the sound room to work on, so they were helping with this event, so.

Kevin Scheibler 14:31

Our custodians were up there helping. Obviously, all of our event coordinators and all of our full-time staff were up there. The accountants, everybody, it was—

Jenna Courtade 14:42

—All hand's on deck, literally—

Kevin Scheibler 14:43

Because we had nothing else to do, right? This was our...at the same time, our department runs the forum in all these conferences, so we were doing saliva testing in those places. And that was a process as well. Still is.

Michael Wesbecher 15:04

Can you speak to that, about how—because I know that we'll be talking to like, Margaret and a few others, I think, did you all meet with Hugh [Musick]?

Jessie Knoles 15:11

Yes, I did.

Michael Wesbecher 15:12

Hugh as well. Okay, so, Hugh Musick, as well—so can you talk a little bit about your experience with the saliva tests even before the vaccine as well, and even the process now?

Kevin Scheibler 15:21

Yeah and that has changed dramatically from the beginning, right. So we started that in August of 2020. We started at the forum in the main hall, a 20,000 square feet space. We had 26, 27 stations set up. And it was the same kind of concept, right, they came in at the entrances where they checked in, swiped their i-card [university ID], got their tube, got sent to which lane to go to. They provided their sample and then dropped it off and left out a separate door. And we did that at the forum for, I want to say, through the first whole first semester, fall semester, of 2020. Then we had, we brought some students back, and some faculty back, for spring semester, so we added locations. So then we added a location at Student Center West and a location at Student Center East and kept the forum. And same kind of process, you know, just different rooms, same in one door out another door. And that then, we continued that for almost a year. And then beginning of 2022, we moved to--or actually, I think it was the end of spring semester 2022—we moved to...we just provide them with the tube and then they go do it and bring it back. And now, next semester, we're going to the...we're not going to staff it. We're going to have the tubes at locations within Student Center East, Student Center West, and Athletics. You'll go grab a tube, then you'll put the number—you'll go to SHIELD—put the number in, or log in, put the number in, to assign that tube to you, give your sample and then just drop it off.

Jenna Courtade 17:31

Cool.

Kevin Scheibler 17:32

So it's gone from—in that operation—was 40 or 50 people a day at the beginning down to zero.

Jenna Courtade 17:40

Yeah. And was it only for students, or, would you ever--

Kevin Scheibler 17:45

Everyone.

Jenna Courtade 17:46

Okay, cool.

Kevin Scheibler 17:46

Anybody with an i-card.

Jenna Courtade 17:47

Okay. Well, but so like, not necessarily community members.

Kevin Scheibler 17:52

Not the saliva testing.

Jenna Courtade 17:53

Okay, okay.

Kevin Scheibler 17:55

Just because it was the way that system worked.

Jenna Courtade 17:57

Yeah, yeah. Okay.

Michael Wesbecher 17:59

And just for clarification, that was before we adopted SHIELD. Because SHIELD, because—

Kevin Scheibler 18:06

—we had our own—

Michael Wesbecher 18:07

—at the early [stage?], before SHIELD was really developed, UIC had kind of developed our own system, and then it kind of evolved to a more adoption of SHIELD.

Kevin Scheibler 18:16

Yeah, we didn't go to SHIELD until January of 2022.

Jenna Courtade 18:21

Okay.

Kevin Scheibler 18:23

So we—all of the samples before were going to our lab. Same process, right. Same. Same test.

Jenna Courtade 18:30

Yeah.

Kevin Scheibler 18:30

Just different.

Michael Wesbecher 18:31

And from your perspective, that process was really, essentially the same thing, right? It didn't really change—

Kevin Scheibler 18:36

—The logistics was where we dropped off the samples at the end of the day.

Jenna Courtade 18:40

Yeah, and what was that lab? Where was that lab located?

Kevin Scheibler 18:45

So the lab, the UIC lab was in the hospital. And then now there's a trailer—although, I think the trailer might be gone, too, because I think they sent a note about the drop off location has changed—but the trailer was in a lot over on Roosevelt and Halstead.

Jenna Courtade 18:46

—the first—

Jenna Courtade 18:48

Okay, and that was the SHIELD trailer? Okay...do we have any other questions? I'll stop this.

Michael Wesbecher 19:09

Or do you want to see anything else? I don't know. It's kind of straightforward. The process and from all the photos that I've seen—I never came here during any act of vaccination—but I think you described everything extremely thoroughly. And once you see the—and I'll show you the pictures when we get back to the office, too—that it was a pretty efficient system. And I think you said it really well, Kevin, that like, we truly did leverage everyone's collective expertise. Whether it was security, events, logistics, event planning, medical planning. You know, getting mass vaccinations distributed. I think everyone showed up willing to help effectively.