

GUIDANCE FOR PHARMACY ON WASTAGE MITIGATION FOR ACPIP

Updated: December 15, 2021

This guidance is intended to provide an approach to preventing vaccine waste.

This guidance aligns with **core principles of fairness and equity** and also enables alignment with broader commitments to **maximizing benefits and minimizing harms**, as well as acting to ensure the **sustainability of our health system**.

People cannot have access to health resources simply on the grounds of their social connection to a healthcare provider. Enabling access to health resources in this way is inconsistent with core values of our public health system which determines access based on need.

Remaining doses should be allocated in a **fair and equitable manner** that can withstand scrutiny about favoritism or conflicts of interest. Examples of conflicts of interest include if family/friends are given access ahead of others, if access is given in response to gifts or compensation, or if staff deliver vaccine outside the pharmacy/clinic setting.

These strategies are provided in sequential order and follow a series of steps of best practice and advice to community pharmacists should a situation arise where there are unused doses available that would otherwise be discarded.

Pharmacies should work in advance to develop an evolving **on-call or standby list of individuals** who will be called and offered immunization with any doses remaining at the end of the day as per the following priority groups.

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For any remaining doses at the end of the day, determination of next eligible individuals are in the following order of priority:

PRIORITY ONE: Eligible individuals who have not yet received a first dose of vaccine. These individuals may:

- have not yet booked an appointment (or are vaccine hesitant)
- have already booked an appointment for a later date
- have had a previously booked appointment that has been postponed or cancelled

PRIORITY TWO: Individuals currently within the Alberta Health recommended window for administration of a second dose of vaccine. These individuals may:

- have received their first dose from a pharmacy or Alberta Health Services and are now eligible based on elapsed time since first dose and Alberta Health policy direction

PRIORITY THREE: Individuals who want a third dose of vaccine, whose second dose was administered at least six months ago. Priority should be given to those who are the oldest (e.g. by birth year) wherever possible.

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IMPORTANT:

Remaining doses should not be made available:

1. To any individual in a manner that puts pharmacy staff in an actual or perceived conflict of interest.
2. In any way that will encourage loitering in and around the pharmacy.

There is no ethical duty to do impossible things; it is reasonable that certain options are simply not feasible, or the costs of making them feasible are too great. There are different constraints and opportunities at different sites.

Questions and Answers

Why is preplanning required?

This will assist in ensuring a consistent, fair and equitable approach to wastage and the efficient provision of the COVID-19 vaccine. Pre-planning ensures that decisions are not made during time-crunches at the end of the day running the risk of potentially inappropriate allocation of vaccines by well-intentioned individuals trying to avoid wastage. It also encourages transparency.

Why can I not call my friends / family to offer them the vaccine left over at the end of the day?

A person or group cannot have access to the vaccine because of their relationship with a pharmacy staff member or ownership. Offering vaccines, even “leftover” vaccines to avoid wastage, to friends and family carries legal and reputational risk and may be considered unprofessional conduct. Access needs to be consistent, fair and informed by government guidance regarding sequencing of various groups.

Family and friends are not excluded from receiving the excess vaccine **if they are part of those eligible groups selected**. If friends/family happen to be included in a group invited to receive excess vaccine, this should be documented with a clear rationale.

However, pharmacies should not call potential eligible groups to receive excess vaccine with the **intention** that the eligible group be invited **because their or another staff's family member or friend is part of that group**.

What if I am worried that the pharmacy/clinic where I work is not following the government sequencing and this guidance?

You are encouraged to raise your concerns with your manager. If you are uncomfortable doing so, you can contact the Alberta College of Pharmacy to obtain further advice.