

GUIDANCE FOR PHARMACY ON WASTAGE MITIGATION FOR ACPIP

Updated: June 3, 2021

This guidance is intended to provide an approach to preventing vaccine waste while ensuring that opportunities to be immunized with leftover doses are offered first to individuals who are eligible to be immunized in the current or previous vaccine phase.

Remaining consistent with the sequencing criteria 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.

GUIDANCE FOR PHARMACY ON WASTAGE MITIGATION FOR ACPIP

Updated: June 3, 2021

Seek individuals for the on-call or standby list for any remaining doses at the end of the day 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 will become eligible for a second dose of vaccine in the immediate future, based on the date of their first dose. Priority should be given to those who are the oldest in this eligibility group wherever possible (e.g. by birth year).

NOTE ON VACCINE INTERCHANGEABILITY FOR SECOND DOSES:

When considering the use of remaining doses at the end of the day for individuals eligible for second doses the following considerations must be followed:

- The same vaccine is generally used for all doses in a vaccine series.
- Individuals who had a first dose of COVISHIELD/AstraZeneca vaccine may choose to be immunized with either AstraZeneca vaccine or one of the mRNA vaccines for their second dose.
- Individuals who had a first dose of mRNA vaccine must NOT be immunized with AstraZeneca vaccine for their second dose.
- Individuals who had a first dose of mRNA vaccine may receive their second dose with either mRNA vaccine.
- Two doses of any of the COVID-19 vaccines available in Alberta is considered a complete, safe and protective vaccine series.
- **IN ALL INSTANCES, IF THE SECOND DOSE VACCINE IS DIFFERENT FROM THE FIRST DOSE VACCINE THE INDIVIDUAL MUST BE MADE AWARE, CONSENT TO THE CHANGE, AND THIS MUST BE DOCUMENTED IN THE RECORD OF CARE FOR THE PATIENT.**

GUIDANCE FOR PHARMACY ON WASTAGE MITIGATION FOR ACPIP

Updated: June 3, 2021

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 PACVP@ab.bluecross.ca to obtain further advice.