

Alberta Public Health Activities Program (APHAP) Influenza Immunization Program 2018/2019

This season's provincially funded—Influenza Immunization Program begins **October 15, 2018**.

Pharmacist participation in the provincially funded influenza immunization program is guided by the Alberta Government *Influenza Immunization Policy (IIP)*, the Alberta College of Pharmacy (ACP) *Standards of Practice for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians*, the *Standards for the Operation of Licensed Pharmacies* and Ministerial Order 601/2018 (the Compensation Plan for Pharmacy Services).

The Alberta Pharmacists' Association has updated the influenza immunization education program for 2018/2019 which supports pharmacists in understanding the IIP. The education program should be completed prior to administering influenza vaccine and can be found at www.rxa.ca/pharmacy-initiatives/influenza-immunization-program.aspx.

Updates to the Influenza Immunization Program for 2018/2019 include:

The IIP has been updated and can be accessed at Alberta Influenza Immunization Policy at www.health.alberta.ca/professionals/immunization-policy.html.

Age of administration changes

Pharmacists may administer influenza vaccine to Albertans five years of age and older.

Important considerations to note:

- Children who are younger than nine years of age and **have never received a dose of seasonal influenza vaccine require two doses** with a minimum spacing of four weeks between doses.
- A review of the child's immunization record can be viewed in Netcare.
- Pharmacists immunizing children five to eight years of age should be comfortable with appropriate restraint and distraction techniques and be prepared to respond to an emergency event (for example, anaphylaxis).
- Pharmacists must submit claims to Alberta Blue Cross within three business days. However, claims for doses administered to a child five to eight years of age should be entered as a priority to prevent delays in updating the child's immunization record to ensure accuracy of the immunization schedule and history. It takes about two weeks for the immunization record to be uploaded for viewing in Netcare.

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Products

- The vaccine product for the provincially funded program is Quadrivalent Inactivated Vaccine (QIV) for Albertans six months of age and older.
- The vaccines supplied will be Fluzone® (predominantly as prefilled syringes but multi-dose vials may be available) or FluLaval® Tetra, and will be available to pharmacies for the provincially funded influenza program for clients five years of age and older.
- FluMist and Fluad will NOT be available as part of the 2018/2019 provincially funded program.
- The minimum/maximum order quantities at a time, are: 1 unit - minimum; 20 units (200 doses) - maximum.
- Exemptions to the maximum ordering thresholds will be considered during an outbreak situation only, as determined by Alberta Health. Outbreak situations will be communicated to pharmacists via the Alberta College of Pharmacy and the Alberta Pharmacists' Association.
- Administration of provincially funded influenza vaccine to the general public should not take place prior to October 15, 2018. Pharmacists may administer privately-purchased influenza vaccine prior to the launch date at a cost to the client. Pharmacists must inform the client that provincially funded vaccine is available to them at no cost as of October 15, 2018. Should a client wish to receive a privately purchased vaccine, the vaccine and associated administration costs would be the responsibility of the client. Such costs will not be reimbursed by Alberta Health (at any time).
- The goal for 2018/2019 is to immunize 35 per cent of Albertans.
 - For the 2017/2018 season 29 per cent of Albertans were immunized (up from 27 per cent the previous year):
 - 60 per cent of seniors 65 years of age and older
 - 22 per cent of Albertans aged nine to 64
 - 89 per cent of long-term care residents

For Reason Code identification, the following PINs must be used for pharmacist-administered provincially funded influenza vaccines:

05666603 - Healthcare Worker

05666646 - Pregnant Woman

05666602 - Greater than or equal to 65 years of age

05666664 - Five to 64 years of age

If a client falls under more than one PIN category, the number uppermost in the list must be used (for example, if the client is a pregnant healthcare worker, use the 05666603 PIN).

Pharmacists are required to submit influenza immunization service claims via Alberta Blue Cross within three business days of administering influenza vaccine to assist with vaccine supply monitoring and timely recording of immunization event into Netcare.

Pharmacies **must order vaccine judiciously**. A sufficient supply of vaccine is available for pharmacies. Destruction of unused vaccine is the pharmacy's responsibility.

Vaccine storage and Handling

- Pharmacies must meet the requirements outlined in the Alberta Vaccine Cold Chain (AVCC) Policy prior to receiving influenza vaccine and prior to immunization services being offered. The AVCC Policy can be accessed at

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open.alberta.ca/publications/alberta-vaccine-cold-chain-policy.

- Cold chain breaks must be reported to Alberta Health at health.imm@gov.ab.ca as soon as possible and within one business day of the occurrence.
- For the 2017/2018 season, there was a reduction in the number of cold chain breaks and the corresponding value of vaccine discarded. 25 cold chain breaks were reported (down from 48 in 2016/17) to Alberta Health by pharmacists, resulting in \$10,200 worth of vaccine which had to be discarded as stability was compromised (down from \$12,000 in 2016/17). Thank you for your diligence in vaccine storage and handling.
- The main reason for cold chain breaks (57 per cent) in 2016/2017 was vaccine being left on the counter or in a clinic room overnight. For the 2017/2018 season there was a decrease in cold chain breaks due to this reason. Please ensure vaccine bags have a temperature monitoring device that is routinely checked and that workflow processes include a check of the clinic room for vaccine prior to closing.

Claims processes

Pharmacies can begin submitting Influenza Immunization Program service claims for the general public as of October 15, 2018.

In accordance with the Influenza Immunization Policy, a pharmacist shall not bill Alberta Blue Cross for administering influenza vaccine to children less than five years of age.

Immunizers and residents within supportive living facilities, which meet the Alberta Outreach Program definition, may be immunized as soon as vaccine is available. Supportive living sites meeting the Alberta Outreach Program definition have been identified by Alberta Health Services (AHS). Only sites that AHS has identified will qualify for early vaccination. Pharmacies serving eligible supportive living facilities may be contacted by Alberta Health to determine vaccine distribution processes. For questions on eligibility email Alberta Health at health.imm@gov.ab.ca

For immunization service claims, the individual's personal health number (PHN) will be used to confirm eligibility. Netcare should be accessed to validate PHNs. Incorrect submission of the client's eligibility will result in claim rejections with the response code **C8 - No record of this beneficiary**.

All claims must be submitted electronically through the Alberta Blue Cross PRIDE RT claims adjudication system with the following data elements:

- Carrier Code 16 (as the third party plan)
- Group number for all transactions must be 23464, Section 000
- Pharmacy license number
- Pharmacist identification number
- Client number: client's personal health number (PHN) as the client number
- Client's full name: last and first name
- Client's date of birth
- Client's gender
- Relationship code: should your software require you to enter a relationship code, zero (0) must be used as the default
- Prescriber reference ID number (for example, license number of pharmacist with ACP injection authorization)
- Service date
- PIN/Reason Code
- Quantity (for example, one)
- "86" should be used in the Prescriber Reference Code field.

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Only immunization services provided by ACP injection-authorized pharmacists in approved locations and situations are eligible—for Influenza Immunization Program compensation. Pharmacists may not delegate the administration of publicly funded influenza vaccines to other healthcare professionals (paid or volunteer).

Charges of up to \$13 per injectable influenza immunization service may be claimed as per the Compensation Plan for Pharmacy Services.

Pharmacists are reminded that Influenza immunizations administered in a workplace setting for the purpose of immunizing employees is different than immunizing in a public off-site clinic. Provincially funded vaccines may be used at workplace settings; however, the assessment for administration of those doses is not provincially funded and cannot be billed to Alberta Blue Cross. Pharmacists may charge the employer for the service delivery.

Alberta Health Influenza Antiviral Drug Policy as Applied to Vulnerable Populations living in Congregate Living Settings (June 2018)

Through the Alberta Public Health Activities Program (APHAP), the Alberta Health Influenza Antiviral Drug Policy as Applied to Vulnerable Persons Populations living in Congregate Living Settings (policy) facilitates the funding and provision of antiviral drugs at no cost to vulnerable populations living in a congregate living setting.

“Vulnerable Population” means individuals living in Alberta who are at a higher risk of suffering more significant consequences from influenza than the general population, as determined by a Medical Officer of Health, due to one or more factors that include, but are not limited to, age, chronic health conditions or multiple health conditions.

“Congregate Living Setting” means a supportive living accommodation to which the Supportive Living Accommodation Licensing Act applies; homeless shelters; group homes; and any other place in Alberta, excluding Lloydminster, that provides a form of congregate living to individuals who are members of a vulnerable population. Residents of a nursing home under the Nursing Homes Act who have been prescribed an antiviral by a physician or patients in a hospital under the Hospitals Act are not eligible for the funding and provision of influenza antivirals under this policy.

An individual is eligible (Eligible Person) for the funding and provision of an antiviral drug under this policy at no cost to the individual if a Medical Officer of Health has confirmed the individual is a member of a Vulnerable Population and lives in a Congregate Living Setting where an MOH has confirmed the spread of influenza or influenza-like illness (ILI) and has determined that it is necessary to use an antiviral drug to manage the spread of influenza or ILI for public health purposes.

Antiviral prescriptions should be treated as a priority and dispensed in a manner that meets the needs of the client (e.g., compliance packaging). As per the policy, there should be no charge to the Eligible Person for any antiviral prescription costs.

Claims processes

To receive compensation for eligible oseltamivir prescriptions, claims must include the following data elements:

- Carrier Code 16 (as the third party plan)
- Group number for all transactions must be 23464, Section 000
- Pharmacy License number
- Pharmacist identification number
- Client number: client’s personal health number (PHN). In the case of Albertans with no PHN, such as those in homeless shelters, HL0000000 must be used.
- Client’s full name: last and first name
- Client’s date of birth

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- Client's gender
- Relationship code: should your software require you to enter a relationship code, zero (0) must be used as the default
- Prescriber reference ID number
- Service date
- DIN (for the oseltamivir product)
- Quantity (of oseltamivir dispensed)
- Payment amount (medication cost, upcharges and dispensing fee)
- "86" should be used in the Prescriber Reference Code field
- EI number in the format YYYYXXX entered into the special authorization field, left justified with no hyphen. Claims without the EI number will be rejected with the response code CZ - **No record of authorization number.** (YYYY is the year when the outbreak was declared by the MOH and XXX is the number of the investigation as provided by Alberta Health Services.)

The following oseltamivir products are eligible for coverage:

DIN	Product description
00002381842	Tamiflu 6 mg/ml oral suspension
00002241472	Tamiflu 75 mg capsule
00002304848	Tamiflu 30 mg capsule
00002304856	Tamiflu 45 mg capsule
00002457989	Nat-Oseltamivir 75 mg capsules

It is of importance that Nat-Oseltamivir be used in accordance with the Health Canada-approved product monograph. In the rare instance where no commercial Tamiflu or Nat-Oseltamivir products are suitable or available, an oseltamivir compound may be claimed using the PIN 00999999 (and the appropriate oseltamivir products).

Claims for oseltamivir prescriptions billed to other Government of Alberta drug plans, such as Coverage for Seniors (Group 66), are not eligible for coverage.

When you have questions:

For assistance with benefit or claim inquiries, please contact an Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy Services Provider Relations contact centre representative at:

780-498-8370 (Edmonton and area) • **403-294-4041** (Calgary and area) • **1-800-361-9632** (toll free)

FAX 780-498-8406 (Edmonton and area) • **FAX 1-877-305-9911** (toll free)

Alberta Blue Cross offers online access to current Pharmacy Benefits and supplemental claiming information to assist with the submission of your direct bill drug claims. Visit ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-home.php



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