

Influenza planning for the 2020/2021 season

The Alberta Influenza Immunization Policy (AIIP) has now been posted and is available for pharmacists to review and plan for the start of the program. To help you plan for your fall participation in the AIIP, please note the following.

Program start dates

- The 'give as you get' model for the influenza vaccine that was introduced for the 2019/2020 season will not be in effect for the upcoming 2020/2021 season. The estimated vaccine delivery dates and projected national vaccine supply have necessitated this change.
- For the 2020/2021 season, the universal influenza program will begin the week of October 19.
- The Alberta Influenza Immunization Outreach program will start the week of October 13.

Preparing to pre-order vaccine

- All pharmacy wholesalers will be requesting pharmacies to submit one influenza vaccine pre-order. To determine initial order requirements, pharmacies should consider ordering sufficient influenza vaccine to cover the following:
 - Outreach influenza immunization service commitments for supportive living facilities.
 - Influenza immunization service delivery for high-risk patients who may request immunization of their own accord prior to October 19, when determined to be clinically appropriate by the pharmacist.
 - All other eligible individuals for the first week of the universal influenza program after October 19.
- After the initial order has been received, the maximum reorder amount has been increased for 2020/2021 to 30 units.

Note: only one initial order will be distributed to each pharmacy prior to October 19. Reorders for additional supply will not be accepted by any wholesaler until on or after October 19. Wholesalers will do their best to fill reorders as allocated influenza vaccine supply allows. Pharmacies must ensure they have capacity to safely store the full quantity of their initial order of vaccine within cold chain requirements.

Individuals requesting immunization prior to October 19, who do not meet the Outreach or High-Risk criteria, can be immunized with privately purchased vaccine, which pharmacies can order appropriately.

While not part of the provincially funded program, both Flumist® and Fluzone HD® may be available this season depending on availability from manufacturers and wholesalers.

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Awareness and messaging

- Public messaging and awareness campaigns are limited to the promotion of the October 19 universal influenza program start date, with a focus on high-risk individuals.
- The Alberta Influenza Immunization Program public messaging and awareness campaigns are limited to the October 19, 2020, date.
 - While the program remains universal access as in previous years, there will be a focus this year on those individuals who are high-risk. Details can be found in the policy document.

More information about the Alberta Immunization Policy (AIP) is available on the Alberta Health website: <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-immunization-policy.aspx>.

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 Benefacts and supplemental claiming information to assist with the submission of your direct bill drug claims. **Visit** ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-home.php

