

## **Alberta Public Health Activities Program (APHAP) Influenza Immunization Program 2020/2021**

This season's provincially funded—Influenza Immunization Program begins October 19, 2020.

Pharmacist participation in the provincially funded Influenza Immunization Program is guided by the Alberta government's 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 627/2019 (the Compensation Plan for Pharmacy Services).

The Alberta Pharmacists' Association has updated the influenza immunization education program for 2020/2021 which supports pharmacists in understanding the IIP. The education program should be completed prior to administering influenza vaccine and can be found at <https://rxa.ca/we-educate/online-learning-catalogue/>.

### **Updates for this year**

Influenza immunization service delivery will focus on increasing the immunization rates for high risk populations who are most at risk for morbidity and mortality due to influenza disease.

Certain populations, such as young children, older adults and those with chronic health conditions, are at higher risk for serious influenza complications, such as viral pneumonia, secondary bacterial pneumonia and worsening of underlying medical conditions.

The IIP has been updated and can be accessed through the *Alberta Influenza Immunization Policy* at <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/alberta-influenza-immunization-policy>.

### **COVID-19 considerations**

Influenza immunization is a high priority due to the likelihood of influenza viruses co-circulating with COVID-19 and the additive effects of concurrent circulation of influenza on health care and public health system capacity.

Influenza immunization service delivery will need to be adapted to include measures to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 such as the following:

- Venue set up and clinic operations where influenza immunizations will be offered.
- Environmental infection prevention and control processes at venues and clinics.
- Infection prevention and control for health practitioners.
- Post immunization after-care guidance.
- Considerations for alternate models of service delivery.
- Considerations when immunizing in supportive or congregate living facilities.

Specific information on COVID-19 and influenza can be found in the *Influenza immunization during COVID-19: guidance for the 2020-21 season*, which can be found online at

<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/influenza-immunization-during-covid-19-guidance-for-the-2020-21-season>.

Additional information is available from the Alberta Pharmacists' Association Influenza Resources page at

<https://rxa.ca/pharmacy-practice-support-and-resources/influenza/>.

## Program launch

The universal influenza immunization program can begin for all Albertans October 19, 2020. Claims will be accepted beginning October 1, 2020.

For those pharmacies participating in the Alberta Outreach Program, immunizers can begin to immunize individuals as soon as influenza vaccine is available, which is anticipated by October 13, 2020.

## Products

- The vaccine product for the provincially funded program is Quadrivalent Inactivated Vaccine (QIV), available in pharmacies for clients five years of age and older.
- The primary provincially funded influenza vaccine that will be supplied is Alfluria<sup>®</sup>Tetra, Influvac tetra and Fluzone<sup>®</sup>; however, FluLaval<sup>®</sup>Tetra and/or other influenza vaccines may also be distributed.
- Fluzone HD will be provided for 65 years of age and older residing in a provincially funded long-term care bed in auxiliary hospitals and nursing homes, as well as designated supported living in a facility with long-term care beds also.

## Ordering

Pharmacies must **order vaccine judiciously**. A sufficient supply of vaccine is available for pharmacies.

Influenza vaccine is distributed to pharmacies through Pharmacy Wholesale Distributors (PWD) in collaboration with Alberta Health.

- Once pipeline fills are complete, the **maximum daily QIV re-order amount has been increased to 30 units (300 doses)**.
- All initial orders of supply will be distributed across the province prior to additional orders being filled. Please do not request early shipment dates. Pharmacies can submit re-orders once the universal program begins on October 19, 2020.

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 ACP and the RxA.

Destruction of unused vaccine is the pharmacy's responsibility.

## General considerations

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 provincially funded influenza vaccines to other health care professionals (paid or volunteer).

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.

Pharmacists may administer privately-purchased influenza vaccine at a cost to the client. Pharmacists must inform the client that provincially funded vaccine is available to them at no cost. 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.

## Vaccine storage and handling

Pharmacies must meet the requirements outlined in the *Alberta Vaccine Storage and Handling Policy for Provincially Funded Vaccine*. This policy can be accessed at

**<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/alberta-vaccine-storage-and-handling-policy-for-provincially-funded-vaccine>**.

Cold chain breaks must be reported to the vaccine manufacturer as soon as possible and no later than five days for viability determination. A copy of the documentation must be kept with the vaccine. This record must be retained for at least seven years.

## Age of administration

Pharmacists may administer influenza vaccine to Albertans five years of age and older. The following are 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 competent with appropriate restraint and distraction techniques and be prepared to respond to an emergency event (for example, anaphylaxis).

## Claims processes

Pharmacists must submit claims to Alberta Blue Cross within three business days. However, claims for doses administered to a child under nine 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 can take up to two weeks for the immunization record to be uploaded for viewing in Netcare.

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**.

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

Reason codes	Descriptor	Pin
46	Pregnant women	05666646
02	Greater than or equal to 65 years of age	05666602
68	<p><b>5 years to 64 years of age with an eligible chronic condition, including the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cardiac or pulmonary disorders;</li> <li>• neurologic or neurodevelopment conditions;</li> <li>• diabetes mellitus and other metabolic diseases;</li> <li>• cancer, immune compromising conditions (due to underlying disease, therapy, or both);</li> <li>• renal disease;</li> <li>• anemia or hemoglobinopathy;</li> <li>• morbid obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 and over); and</li> <li>• children 6 months to 18 years of age undergoing treatment for long periods with acetylsalicylic acid.</li> </ul> <p><b>And/or belong to a high-risk population, such as individuals who are Indigenous, homeless or otherwise marginalized</b></p>	05666606
39	Household or close contacts of individuals in the above three categories	05666604
69	5 years to 64 years (routine) with no individual risk or not a household contact of an individual in a high-risk population	05666605

If a client falls under more than one PIN category, the number uppermost in the list must be used.

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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 pharmacists with ACP injection authorization).
- Service date.
- PIN/Reason Code.
- Quantity (for example, one).
- "86" should be used in the Prescriber Reference Code field.

Charges of up to \$13 per injectable influenza immunization service may be claimed as per the Compensation Plan for Pharmacy Services under the *Assessment for the Administration of a Publicly Funded Vaccine*.

### ***Alberta Health Influenza Antiviral Drug policy as applied to Vulnerable Populations Living in Congregate Living Settings policy***

Through the Alberta Public Health Activities Program (APHAP), the *Alberta Health Influenza Antiviral Drug policy as applied to Vulnerable 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 (MOH) 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 (such as, 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.
- 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.

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- 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.
- 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.
- Pharmacy License number.
- 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
00002472635	Nat-Oseltamivir 30 mg Capsule
00002472643	Nat-Oseltamivir 45 mg Capsule
00002457989	Nat-Oseltamivir 75 mg Capsule

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](http://ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-home.php)

