

# Roles and Responsibilities

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## Alberta Health

The goal of Alberta Health's provincially funded immunization program is to provide Albertans with high-quality, cost-effective vaccines that protect our population from disease while using public health dollars wisely. Many factors are considered when determining which vaccines are provincially funded.

Alberta Health is responsible for public health and population health initiatives. Alberta Health oversees vaccines and immunization initiatives within the Alberta public health system. Alberta Health understands that health care professionals play a critical role in educating the public regarding the importance and value of immunization. Trusted immunization service providers including physicians, nurses, and pharmacists are important stakeholders in the Alberta Immunization Program.

Alberta Health:

- procures all provincially funded vaccine for the Province and operates the Provincial Vaccine Depot,
- develops the Alberta Immunization Policy and supporting biological pages,
- sets the immunization eligibility and immunization schedule(s),
- manages the Alberta Vaccine Inventory Management System,
- is responsible for posting immunization coverage rates, and
- monitors adverse events following immunization.

Alberta Health is also responsible for reviewing new provincially funded vaccine requests from new health practitioner types (e.g. speciality clinics and/or requests for provincially funded vaccines not routinely available outside of Alberta Health Services Public Health). Before Alberta Health can onboard new providers to the provincially funded immunization program, there are a number of factors that are considered, including but not limited to:

- local community needs,
- provincial and local immunization rates,
- disease epidemiological data,
- National Advisory Committee on Immunization Recommendations,
- ability to comply with the Immunization Regulation,
- the demonstrated value the new service provider brings,
- impact to current immunization programs,
- cost of onboarding and maintaining new providers,
- vaccine supply management,
- balancing vaccine supply and demand,
- shifting demand from one provider to another provider,
- cold chain management, vaccine stability, and supply chain logistics,
- Canada's and Alberta's vaccine procurement environment, and
- geographical coverage of current immunization services.

## Responsibilities of all Health Practitioners

- Health Practitioners who offer provincially funded immunizations services are required to comply with the [Immunization Regulation](#), and comply with all Alberta Health immunization policies.

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- Health Practitioners who receive provincially funded vaccine from Alberta Health Services (AHS) public health are required to have a vaccine accountability agreement in place with AHS.
- Ensure immunization competencies are current as per health care professional's licensing body.
- Obtain informed consent prior to administering any immunization.
- Offer provincially funded vaccine as per the posted immunization schedule while adhering to the biological pages in the Alberta Immunization Policy when administering provincially funded vaccine(s).
  - Discuss vaccine(s) that are available for purchase that fall outside of routine population health provincially funded programs.
- Ensure that vaccines maintain potency through optimal transportation, storage and handling. See [Alberta Vaccine Storage and Handling Policy for Provincially Funded Vaccine](#)<sup>4</sup> and the [Immunization Regulation](#)
- Report immunization and adverse events following immunization as per the reporting requirements outlined in the [Immunization Regulation](#) and the [Immunization Data Submission and Response Guidelines](#).
  - Health practitioners must ensure that immunizations and assessments are submitted electronically to Alberta Health within seven days.
    - Only assessments where there is an intention of immunizing where immunization is recommended and consent is declined or the immunization is contraindicated must be reported.
    - Report past unreported immunization if a complete record is available and is in the context of an assessment with the intention of immunizing.
  - Health practitioners must report adverse events following immunization to Alberta Health Services within three days of becoming aware.
    - Monitor and report adverse events following immunization as per reporting requirements outlined in the Adverse Events Following Immunization Policy for Alberta Immunization Providers.<sup>6</sup>
    - Refer the [AHS Centralized AEFI Reporting Process](#).
- Record a client's immunization in a client chart (paper and/or electronic).
- Offer client's a record of the administered immunization(s).

## Alberta Health Services Public Health Responsibilities

- Alberta Health Services Public Health is responsible for operationalizing Alberta Health's immunization policies and ensuring that AHS Immunization Program Standards are aligned with the Alberta Immunization Policy.
- The provision of routine immunization programs and targeted immunization programs is a vital public health priority in Alberta, and a core public health program.
- The delivery of infant, preschool, and school (to the end of grade 9) immunizations in Alberta is provided exclusively through AHS Public Health in an effective, efficient, cost-effective, and standardized manner.<sup>1</sup>
- This mandate is fulfilled by AHS Public Health who continues to be well positioned to deliver routine childhood immunization programs, and retains the responsibility and accountability for ensuring that all children have access to and are offered immunizations according to Alberta's immunization schedule.

### Children

- Ensure that all children are immunized as closely as possible to the provincially established immunization schedule and according to Alberta's Immunization Policy.
- Follow up on children who are not up to date for immunization as per the schedule specified in the Alberta Immunization Policy.

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- Implement plans to reach Alberta immunization coverage rate targets. See [Immunization Goals and Objectives](#).

### **School**

- Review immunization records for all students in grades 1, 6 and 9.
  - Contact parents of grade 1, 6 and 9 who do not have a complete immunization record at least three times per year to attempt getting immunization consent except in the case of a documented refusal or medical contraindication.
  - Offer in school immunization to students in grade 1 who do not have a complete immunization record.
  - Offer in-school immunization (Hepatitis B, HPV-9, Tdap, and Meningococcal vaccines) to students in grades 6 and 9 with the goal of reaching provincial immunization coverage rate targets. See [School Immunization Schedule and Immunization Goals and Objectives](#)
- Review immunization records opportunistically for students that are new to Alberta.
  - Contact parents of new students to Alberta if they are identified to update immunization records.
  - Offer in school or in clinic immunizations to students outside of grades 1, 6, and 9 as they present or if they are identified as per the posted Alberta immunization schedule.

### **Adults and high-risk populations**

- Update immunization according to age and eligibility criteria as adults (18 years of age and older) present to public health.
- Individuals who are considered high risk due to disease, condition, or treatment may be eligible for additional vaccines. See [Immunization of Specific Populations](#).
- The Prenatal Screening program identifies new mothers who are susceptible to rubella and varicella. Susceptible individuals are offered immunization after delivery. Refer to: *Alberta Prenatal Screening Program for Selected Communicable Diseases – Public Health Guidelines*.<sup>2</sup>

### **Other AHS Public Health Responsibilities**

- Have regional plans in place to support public health efforts for large immunization campaigns if needed (e.g., pandemic influenza, COVID-19, measles outbreak).
- Ensure that vaccine is transported, stored and handled according to [Alberta Vaccine Storage and Handling Policy for Provincially Funded Vaccine](#)<sup>4</sup> and the [Immunization Regulation](#).
  - Distribute all provincially funded vaccines to AHS Public Health sites (including FNIHB).
  - Supply provincially funded vaccines to certain health practitioners that offer immunization services across the province.

### **Occupational Settings**

Assessment of immunization status of new employees may be part of the occupational health service provided by the employer. Some occupations have particular risks for specific vaccine-preventable diseases (e.g., animal care and control workers, health care and laboratory workers), and the employee may be eligible for provincially funded vaccine. See [Occupational Considerations for Immunization](#).

- Staff – should have up-to-date routine immunizations and the annual influenza vaccine.

### **Long-term Care Facilities**

- Long term/continuing care facilities should have an annual influenza immunization program in place to ensure that all residents are protected every year. AHS public health will provide support for influenza immunization services as needed.
- A resident's immunization status should be reviewed and updated on admission.
  - Adult and senior residents – Tdap vaccine and pneumococcal vaccine for those 65 years of age and older and those with at-risk health conditions.

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- All immunizations received should be documented on the residents chart and reported to Alberta Health as per the requirements outlined in the *Immunization Regulation*.

## Acute Care Facilities

- Opportunities to immunize high-risk clients (e.g. tetanus-prone injuries in ER, clients on kidney dialysis units, infants hospitalized for solid organ transplant) in an acute care facility before discharge will ensure that an immunization opportunity is not missed, as it is harder to follow up once clients they enter the community.
- Age groups targeted for immunization in acute care facilities include:
  - Newborns born to mothers who are HBsAg carriers or who develop acute hepatitis B infection in the third trimester of pregnancy – hepatitis B immune globulin (HBIG) and first dose of hepatitis B vaccine. Refer to: *Alberta Prenatal Screening Program for Selected Communicable Diseases – Public Health Guidelines*.<sup>2</sup>
  - High risk (underlying medical conditions) – may be eligible for various vaccines. See [Special Situations for Immunization – Immunization of Specific Populations](#).

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Health Unit Association of Alberta. (1993). *Delivery of Child Immunization Programs*.
- <sup>2</sup> Alberta Health, Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). *Alberta prenatal screening program for selected communicable diseases – Public health guidelines*. [www.health.alberta.ca/professionals/notifiable-diseases-guide.html](http://www.health.alberta.ca/professionals/notifiable-diseases-guide.html)
- <sup>3</sup> National Advisory Committee on Immunization. (2015). *Canadian Immunization Guide* (Evergreen ed.). Ottawa, ON: Public Health Agency of Canada. [www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/canadian-immunization-guide.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/canadian-immunization-guide.html)
- <sup>4</sup> Alberta Health. (2018). *Alberta Vaccine Storage and Handling Policy for Provincially Funded Vaccine*. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/2e463027-d2fd-4635-84d1-5e289c21c8e9/resource/da43321e-b0ef-40b9-a7ab-c8f08796b23a/download/aip-alberta-vaccine-storage-policy.pdf>
- <sup>5</sup> Province of Alberta. (2018). *Immunization Regulation*. [http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/2018\\_182.pdf](http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/2018_182.pdf)
- <sup>6</sup> Alberta Health. (2016, December). *Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI), Policy for Alberta Immunization Providers*. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/d86b52a9-45f4-4948-8a06-53b2c045135e/resource/7598f59a-3dfc-4c70-9065-c3bf5b4ee363/download/AIP-AEFI-Policy.pdf>
- <sup>7</sup> Province of Alberta. (2017). *Public Health Act*, Alta. <http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/P37.pdf>
- <sup>8</sup> Province of Alberta. (2018). *Student Record Regulation*, Alta. Reg. 166/2018. [http://www.qp.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=2018\\_166.cfm&leg\\_type=Regs&isbncln=9780779806126&display=html](http://www.qp.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=2018_166.cfm&leg_type=Regs&isbncln=9780779806126&display=html)

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