# Alberta Influenza Immunization Policy

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Alberta Influenza Immunization Policy

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health.imm@gov.ab.ca

Health and Wellness Promotion Branch Public Health and Compliance Division Alberta Health

# **Table of Contents**

# Contents

Quick	Glance for the 2020-2021 Season	4
Influe	nza Vaccine Products:	4
I.	DEFINITIONS	5
II.	PURPOSE	7
III.	ALBERTA TARGETS FOR INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATION	
IV.	EDUCATION/TRAINING	
V.	CLIENT ELIGIBILITY	
VI.	ADMINISTRATION OF VACCINE	8
VII.	IMMUNIZATION REGULATION LOGISTICS:	
Repor	rting Immunizations:	10
Reas	on Codes (Influenza Immunization Record)	11
Repor	rting Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI):	11
Vacci	ne Storage and Handling:	12
VIII.	INFLUENZA VACCINE SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION	12
IX.	WORKPLACE INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATIONS	13
X.	INFLUENZA VACCINE WASTAGE	
Refere	ences	14
Appen	dix A – Guide to off-site coordination* of Influenza Vaccine Administration	15

### Quick Glance for the 2020-2021 Season

### **Alberta Health Influenza Immunization Program Goals and Objectives:**

The 2020-2021 Influenza Immunization Program will continue to be offered universally. Influenza immunization service delivery will be focused on increasing the immunization rates for high-risk populations, who are most at risk for morbidity and mortality due to influenza disease.

### **Influenza Vaccine Availability:**

The Alberta Influenza Immunization Program will begin in October. As part of the Alberta Outreach Program (see definitions), immunizers participating in influenza outreach can begin to immunize individuals as soon as influenza vaccine is available, which is anticipated by October 13, 2020.

Based on national influenza vaccine supply, Alberta is estimating that the universal influenza immunization program can begin for all Albertans October 19, 2020. This includes both on-site and offsite administration.

Immunization of high-risk populations is a priority, health practitioners have to use clinical judgement when deciding to immunize clients who are at high-risk before the universal start date, while understanding the full amount of vaccine is not available in the province yet. Health practitioners must use their initial supply judiciously.

### **Influenza Vaccine Products:**

Quadrivalent inactivated injectable influenza vaccine (QIV) is the provincially funded vaccine available to Albertans six months of age and older. High-dose trivalent inactivate injectable vaccine will be available to individuals who are 65 years of age and older and residing in Long-Term Care (see definition).

### **Immunization Regulation:**

The Alberta Immunization Regulation sets out requirements to standardize practices for all immunization providers, regardless of whether a vaccine is provincially funded or privately purchased.

### **Reporting Requirements:**

 As of January 1, 2021, this Regulation will require health practitioners to ensure a report respecting immunizations and assessments is electronically submitted to the Provincial Immunization Repository (Imm/ARI) within 7 days in accordance with the <u>Immunization Data</u> Submission and Response Guidelines.

### Reporting Adverse Events Following Immunization:

 Health practitioners shall ensure that adverse events following immunization are reported to Alberta Health Services within 3 days of becoming aware.

### Vaccine Storage and Handling:

 Health practitioners shall ensure requirements for the storage, handling and transportation of vaccines are followed.

### **DEFINITIONS** I.

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Alberta Health	Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Alberta as represented by the Minister of Health.		
Alberta Health Services (AHS)	The regional health authority established under the Regional Health Authorities Act.		
Alberta Outreach Program	Includes homeless and marginalized persons, individuals with booked public health immunization appointments as well as:  Long-term care: includes facilities like nursing homes and auxiliary hospitals. Care and accommodation services are provided for people with complex health needs who are unable to remain at home or in a supportive living site.  Supportive living: sites that provide accommodation services along with other supports and care, including but not limited to, senior lodges, group homes, mental health and designated supportive living accommodations.		
Alberta Immunization Policy (AIP)	The immunization policy established by Alberta Health pursuant to the Public Health Act and includes the IIP.		
Alberta Vaccine Inventory System (AVI)	Is the provincial web-based vaccine inventory management system.		
Client	Individuals six months of age and older, who are living, working, going to school, or visiting Alberta for two weeks or longer, are eligible for provincially funded influenza vaccine.		
High-risk Populations  Immunizer	Are individuals who are most at risk for morbidity and mortality due to influenza disease as identified by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization. This includes:  Pregnant Women; Seniors aged 65 years of age and older; Individuals of any age who are residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities; All children 6 to 59 months of age; Indigenous peoples; and Adults and children with chronic health conditions: cardiac or pulmonary disorders; neurologic or neurodevelopment conditions; diabetes mellitus and other metabolic diseases; cancer, immune compromising conditions (due to underlying disease, therapy, or both); renal disease; anemia or hemoglobinopathy; morbid obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 and over); and children 6 months to 18 years of age undergoing treatment for long periods with acetylsalicylic acid. Influenza vaccine is also recommended for those capable of transmitting influenza to high-risk populations: Household or close contacts of individuals included in high-risk populations listed above; and Health Practitioners  A health practitioner who meets the following requirements and is		
HTHTIUHIZEI	<ul> <li>eligible to administer vaccine as part of the Alberta Immunization Program:</li> <li>Is a member of a regulated health profession under the <i>Health Professions Act</i>,</li> <li>Is authorized under the respective statute and regulations to administer a vaccine, and</li> <li>Is compliant with the applicable policies of the Alberta Immunization Policy.</li> </ul>		
	Examples: Immunizers who receive vaccine through AHS:  • Are employed directly by AHS and could include, but are not limited to, AHS Public Health and non-Public Health.		

	<ul> <li>Are not employed directly by AHS and could include, but are not limited to, physicians, employees of long-term care sites, private occupational health services and post-secondary institutions.</li> <li>Community Pharmacists:</li> <li>Receive vaccine from Alberta Health through Pharmacy Wholesale Distributors.</li> </ul>
Legislative Authority	The IIP is established under sections 10 and 12 of the Public Health Act (PHA) and the Immunization Regulation. Under the authority of Ministerial Order 614/2018 pursuant to section 16 of the Regional Health Authorities Act, pharmacies and pharmacists may participate in the delivery of the Alberta Influenza Immunization Program.
Long Term Care	Long-term care is a type of continuing care accommodation for people with complex medical needs who are unable to remain safely at home or in a supportive living accommodation.  Long-term care is provided in nursing homes and auxiliary hospitals, both of which may be referred to as "long-term care facilities".
Personal Health Number (PHN)	The unique identifier assigned by Alberta Health for identification within Alberta's health system. A PHN is assigned to a person upon registration and presumes eligibility for basic health services as defined in the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan.
Pharmacy Wholesale Distributors (PWD)	A pharmacy wholesale distributor who has a vaccine distribution contract with Alberta Health.
Provincial Vaccine Depot (PVD)	The vaccine depot maintained by the Government of Alberta. All provincially funded influenza vaccine will be received through the PVD for further distribution across Alberta.



### II. PURPOSE

Influenza – commonly referred to as the flu – is a respiratory disease caused by a virus that affects the nose, throat and lungs. Influenza is contagious and is easily transmitted from person to person.

Symptoms of influenza typically include sudden onset of fever, cough, and muscle aches. Other common symptoms include headache, chills, loss of appetite, fatigue, and sore throat. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea may also occur, especially in children. Most people will recover within seven to ten days.

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 Alberta Influenza Immunization Policy sets out the requirements for the provincially funded Influenza Immunization Program. 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.

The objectives of Alberta's Influenza Immunization Policy (IIP) are:

- To reduce the incidence and impact of influenza disease in Alberta;
- To have a potent and safe influenza vaccine available for administration;
- To increase the coverage rates of targeted populations (listed below) annually; and
- For all Albertans to have access to provincially funded influenza vaccine.

The objectives of the IIP can be met when all immunizers work together to implement the policy. Collaboration, coordination and communication among immunizers during all phases of the immunization process (from influenza vaccine distribution to front line administration) are critical to strengthen Alberta's capacity to reduce the impact of influenza disease and contribute to the health and well-being of Albertans.

### III. ALBERTA TARGETS FOR INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATION

•	Seniors aged 65 years of age and older	80%
•	Residents of long-term care facilities	95%
•	Covenant Health and AHS Health Practitioners	80%
•	Children aged 6 to 59 months	80%
•	Individuals in high-risk populations (see definitions)	80%

The immunization coverage target rates were set based on international standards and best practices. These targets are consistent with Canada's commitment to World Health Organization (WHO) disease elimination targets, the Global Vaccine Action Plan and the National Immunization Strategy: Immunization Coverage Goals and Vaccine Preventable Diseases Reduction Targets by 2025.

### IV. EDUCATION/TRAINING

All immunizers should review the following resources annually:

- The Alberta Health IIP and influenza vaccine charts.
- The 2020-2021 National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) seasonal influenza vaccine statement and relevant influenza vaccine product monographs.
- The AHS Influenza Immunization for Health Professionals Information Package.
- Alberta Pharmacists' Association (RxA) <u>Annual Influenza Immunization Education</u> and the Alberta College of Pharmacy Seasonal Influenza Information page.

### V. CLIENT ELIGIBILITY

Individuals six months of age and older, who are living, working, going to school, or visiting Alberta for two weeks or longer are eligible for provincially funded influenza vaccine.

Children younger than nine years of age who have <u>never</u> received a dose of seasonal influenza vaccine require two doses with a minimum interval of four weeks between doses.

Clients who do not have a Personal Health Number (PHN) or whose PHN is inactive should be directed to a local AHS Public Health clinic for administration of vaccine.

### VI. ADMINISTRATION OF VACCINE

The Alberta Influenza Immunization Program will begin in October. As part of the Alberta Outreach Program (see definitions), immunizers participating in influenza outreach can begin to immunize individuals as soon as influenza vaccine is available which is anticipated by October 13, 2020.

Based on national influenza vaccine supply, Alberta is estimating that the universal influenza immunization program can begin for all Albertans October 19, 2020. This includes both on-site and offsite administration.

Immunization of high-risk populations is a priority, health practitioners have to use clinical judgement when deciding to immunize clients who are at high-risk before the universal start date, while understanding the full amount of vaccine is not available in the province yet. Health practitioners must use their initial supply judiciously.

### Influenza Vaccines that may be included in the Provincially Funded Program

Product	Quadrivalent Inactivate	d Influenza Vaccine	High dose Trivalent Inactivated Vaccine	
Influenza Vaccine Name	Fluzone <sup>®</sup> FluLaval <sup>®</sup> Tetra	Afluria <sup>®</sup> Tetra Influvac <sup>®</sup> Tetra	Fluzone <sup>®</sup> High Dose	
Presentation	Multidose Vial Pre-filled syringe	Pre-filled syringe	Pre-filled syringe	
Age Group	Six months of age and older	Afluria® Tetra -five years of age and older Influvac® Tetra- three years of age and older	65 years of age and older residing in a provincially funded Long-Term Care bed in auxiliary hospitals and nursing homes.  Note: If a facility with Long Term Care funded beds also has Designated Supportive Living beds, those residents can also be offered Fluzone® High Dose vaccine.	
Influenza Strains	<ul> <li>A/Guangdong-Maonan/SWL1536/2019 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;</li> <li>A/Hong Kong/2671/2019 (H3N2)-like virus;</li> <li>B/Washington/02/2019 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus; and</li> <li>B/Phuket/3073/2013 (B/Yamagata lineage)-like virus.</li> </ul>		<ul> <li>A/Guangdong-Maonan/SWL1536/2019 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;</li> <li>A/Hong Kong/2671/2019 (H3N2)-like virus; and</li> <li>B/Washington/02/2019 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus</li> </ul>	

### Additional Influenza Vaccine Resources:

- Alberta Immunization Policy
- Alberta Health influenza vaccine chart- <u>Influenza Quadrivalent Inactivated Vaccine</u>; <u>Influenza Trivalent High Dose Inactivated Vaccine</u>
- Product monograph- GlaxoSmithKline- <u>FluLaval® Tetra</u>; Sanofi Pasteur<u>- Fluzone® Quadrivalent</u>; <u>Fluzone® High Dose</u>; <u>Seqirus- Afluria® Tetra</u>; BGP Pharma- <u>Influvac® Tetra</u>
- World Health Organization- <u>Recommended composition of influenza virus vaccines for use in the 2020-2021 northern hemisphere influenza season</u>

### VII. IMMUNIZATION REGULATION LOGISTICS:

The Alberta Immunization Regulation sets out requirements to standardize practices for all immunization providers, regardless of whether a vaccine is provincially funded or privately purchased.

- Reporting Immunizations: As of January 1, 2021, this Regulation will require health practitioners
  to ensure a report respecting immunizations and assessments is electronically submitted to the
  Provincial Immunization Repository (Imm/ARI) within 7 days in accordance with the Immunization
  Data Submission and Response Guidelines.
- Reporting Adverse Events Following Immunization: Health practitioners shall ensure that
  adverse events following immunization are reported to Alberta Health Services within 3 days of
  becoming aware.
- Vaccine Storage and Handling: Health practitioners shall ensure requirements for the storage, handling and transportation of vaccines are followed.

### **Reporting Immunizations:**

- For the 2020-2021 influenza season, reporting capabilities will vary as health practitioners are in the process of moving to electronic reporting to meet the reporting requirements outlined in the Immunization Regulation.
- During the transition period aggregate data and Alberta Blue Cross (ABC) claims (which are uploaded in Imm/ARI) will be accepted for the duration of the 2020-2021 influenza season.
- For immunizers who receive vaccine through AHS:
  - If electronic submission functionality is not yet available, aggregate data should be submitted, at minimum monthly, to Alberta Health Services.
  - All doses administered to children nine years of age and under that cannot be reported electronically to Imm/ARI must be submitted to AHS for data entry using the <u>Influenza/Pneumococcal Immunization Record</u>.
- Community Pharmacists must submit claims to Alberta Blue Cross within three business days to assist with influenza vaccine supply monitoring and updating.
- Immunizers should provide the client with their record of immunization if requested.



### Reason Codes (Influenza Immunization Record) are listed in order of priority:

Reason Codes	Descriptor	Pin
46	Pregnant Women	0566646
02	Greater than or equal to 65 years of age	05666602
67	Children 6 months to 59 months of age	N/A
68	<ul> <li>5 years to 64 years of age with an eligible chronic condition: <ul> <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> </li> <li>And/or belong to a high-risk population such as individuals who are indigenous, homeless or otherwise marginalized</li> </ul>	05666606
39	Household or close contacts of individuals in the 46, 02, 67, and 68 reason codes categories and of children under 6 months of age	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

## Reporting Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI):

Monitoring the health and safety of Albertans who receive vaccines is paramount. Immunizers must have protocols in place for the management and reporting of anaphylaxis and other serious adverse events.

The health practitioner shall ensure that the adverse event following immunization is reported to AHS within three days of being informed. When the adverse event is severe (e.g., anaphylaxis), the event should be reported within 24 hours. Please visit the <u>AHS website</u> for further information on the reporting process and to access the <u>AEFI report form</u>.

Details on AEFI reporting, including case definitions and reporting requirements are included in the Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) Policy for Alberta Immunization Providers.

### **Vaccine Storage and Handling:**

The requirements for the storage, handling and transportation of all vaccines are outlined in the Immunization Regulation. Additionally the <u>Alberta Vaccine Storage and Handling Policy for Provincially Funded Vaccine</u> is to be followed.

All known exposures of influenza vaccine to temperatures outside +2.0°C to +8.0°C or light requirements as specified in the product monograph must be reported.

- Immunizers who receive influenza vaccine through AHS: send the <u>Alberta Health Services</u>
   <u>Cold Chain Excursion Report Form</u> to the <u>AHS Zone Contact</u>. For additional information on reporting cold chain excursions, refer to <u>AHS Vaccine Storage and Handling</u>.
- Community Pharmacists: Report cold chain excursions to the influenza vaccine manufacturer
  within five days for viability determination. A copy of the documentation must be kept with the
  vaccine and this record must be retained for at least seven years.

### VIII. INFLUENZA VACCINE SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION

Alberta Health purchases influenza vaccine through a national procurement process. Alberta's full influenza vaccine order is not available at the beginning of October as it arrives into the province in shipments over several months during the influenza season. The Provincial Vaccine Depot (PVD) distributes vaccines as quickly as it is received and monitors supply closely. AHS vaccine depots and the pharmacy wholesale distributors make every effort to distribute the influenza vaccine to all partners in a timely manner. It is not possible for all partners to receive the influenza vaccine on the same day.

- Do not call your distributor asking for early shipments of vaccine. In order to fulfill your vaccine needs, please expect to place multiple orders throughout the season.
- Immunizers should be prudent when ordering influenza vaccine to ensure that influenza vaccine is available for all immunizers.

### Immunizers who receive influenza vaccine through AHS:

- The PVD distributes influenza vaccine to AHS vaccine depots for further distribution.
- AHS is responsible for distributing influenza vaccine to all immunizers (excluding community pharmacists); distribution amounts are based on previous administration and influenza vaccine availability.
- Influenza vaccine orders are placed using the Alberta Vaccine Inventory (AVI) system.

### **Community Pharmacies:**

- Alberta Health Services is not involved with vaccine distribution to pharmacies and should not be contacted regarding influenza vaccine supply.
- Influenza vaccine is distributed to pharmacies through Pharmacy Wholesale Distributors (PWD) in collaboration with Alberta Health.
  - Initial influenza vaccine pipeline amounts are based on:
    - The percentage of influenza immunizations administered in the previous influenza season, and
    - The PWD influenza vaccine allocation and on hand inventory.
  - Once pipeline fills are complete the maximum daily QIV order amount is 30 units (300 doses).
- Use caution when ordering from the PWD's as quantities are ordered using <u>UNITS</u> not doses. A
  unit is equal to <u>10 doses</u>.
- Exemptions to the maximum ordering thresholds will be considered <u>during an outbreak situation</u>, as determined by Alberta Health.

### IX. WORKPLACE INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATIONS

Immunizers offering influenza immunization services in a workplace setting, (with the purpose of immunizing employees) cannot charge Alberta Health for the services. Immunizers may charge the <a href="mailto:employer">employer</a> for the services associated with the administration of the influenza vaccine <a href="mailto:but not for the vaccine">but not for the vaccine</a> itself. This does not include the staff and volunteers in assisted living facilities where the residents are being offered influenza immunization at the same time.

### X. INFLUENZA VACCINE WASTAGE

In order to mitigate and reduce dilution of supply, a judicious approach to influenza vaccine ordering is required. Alberta Health works closely with partners to have less than five percent wastage by the end of the season. Immunizers (excluding AHS Public Health) are responsible for the proper destruction of unused/expired influenza vaccine according to the standards of practice at their respective sites. The cost of destruction will not be reimbursed. Pharmacy wholesalers cannot accept provincially funded influenza vaccine returns.

For immunizers who receive influenza vaccine through AHS, all influenza vaccine left over at the end of the season must be reconciled in AVI using the reason code "Wastage /Influenza Season End".



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World Health Organization. (2020). Recommended composition of influenza virus vaccines for use in the 2020-2021 northern hemisphere influenza season. Retrieved from: https://www.who.int/influenza/vaccines/virus/recommendations/2020-21 north/en/

# Appendix A – Guide to off-site coordination\* of Influenza Vaccine Administration

Off-site influenza vaccine administration must adhere to the most current recommendations set out for the COVID-19 pandemic response. Guidance for physical distancing, visitor restrictions, numbers of individuals that can attend the clinic at a time and personal protective equipment is available at <a href="https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx">https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx</a>. Guidelines for influenza immunization services will be updated closer to the influenza immunization start date to align with the most current guidelines.

Location or Population	Example	Can use public vaccine?	Can Pharmacists bill Alberta Blue Cross?	Requires coordination with facility or setting?
Community Settings	Must be accessible to the public (shopping mall, special event, recreation center, community hall, airport, etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Home Visits	Immunizers to confirm with client that they are not receiving influenza immunization from Public Health or Home Care	Yes	Yes	No
Congregate living settings where Public Health is <b>not</b> providing services	Continuing Care facilities, senior residence, senior lodges, etc.**	Yes	Yes	Yes
Workplace setting where occupational health services are <b>not</b> available	The sole purpose of the off- site clinic is to provide immunizations to employees at their workplace	Yes	No	Yes
Post-secondary students during a time that Public Health or Student Health Services are <b>not</b> providing an immunization clinic	Any post-secondary setting such as a university, college or technical training institute	Yes	Yes	Yes
School or child setting during school hours where Public Health services are being provided	Immunization of children in any school or child care setting, during school hours	No	No	NA
School or child care setting after school hours and open to public	Public immunization clinic after hours in a school gym	Yes	Yes	Yes

<sup>\*</sup> Coordination is required to reduce duplication of influenza immunization services.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Residents, staff, and volunteers can be offered vaccine during the offsite clinic. The services associated can be billed through ABC.