

Ministry of Health

Office of Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health
393 University Avenue, 21st Floor
Toronto ON M5G 2M2

Tel.: 416 212-3831
Fax: 416 325-8412

Ministère de la Santé

Bureau du médecin hygiéniste en chef, santé publique
393 avenue University, 21e étage
Toronto ON M5G 2M2

Tél. : 416 212-3831
Télééc. : 416 325-8412

24 September 2020

Dear Health Care Provider:

Re: Ontario’s Universal Influenza Immunization Program – 2020/2021

With the Ontario Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP) approaching for the 2020/2021 influenza season, the Ministry of Health (“ministry”) is providing you with details regarding the upcoming UIIP. Influenza vaccination will be very important this fall with the potential co-circulation of COVID-19 illness, to protect personal health as well as mitigate impacts on our healthcare system.

The purpose of this letter and the attached Qs & As documents is to provide an understanding of the available influenza vaccine products as well as the current status of the UIIP vaccine supply and distribution process.

Provincial Vaccine Supply and Distribution Process

Each year the ministry receives its supply of influenza vaccine in multiple shipments from the manufacturers starting in mid-to-late September and continuing into November. For the 2020/2021 UIIP season, the total vaccine quantity ordered by the ministry is 5.1 million doses, an increase in the number of doses purchased last season.

The Ontario Government Pharmaceutical and Medical Supply Service (OGPMSS) begins shipping influenza vaccine doses across the province in late September to local public health units and pharmaceutical distributors for further distribution to premises within their jurisdictions.

Distribution of the influenza vaccines in Ontario is described below:

When	Premises that receive vaccine
End of September	Hospitals and Long-term care homes
Early October	Retirement homes and other settings with vulnerable populations
Early-to mid-October	Physicians, pharmacies and all other providers/organizations

All premises across the province should start receiving influenza vaccine by mid-October.

As the ministry receives only a portion of the provincial supply from manufacturers starting in mid to late September, the ministry must distribute smaller quantities in early- to mid-October to ensure equitable distribution across the province and to allow for the provincial supply of vaccine at OGPMSS to replenish. As a result, the initial supply of vaccine is prioritized for public hospitals and long-term care homes (LTCHs).

All UIIP participants can begin immunizing as soon as supply is received, understanding that reorders will not occur until the provincial supply is replenished through additional shipments from manufacturers.

Based on historical usage, over 90% of doses are administered by the end of December. Minimal vaccine quantities that are ordered or at premises in January and onwards are administered. These doses contribute to significant wastage.

To maximize the use of all doses this year and to minimize wastage the ministry will be maximizing the availability of doses at pharmacies including the high-dose TIV.

Timing of Immunization

Influenza vaccine should be offered as soon as it becomes available at health care provider offices, participating pharmacies and at local public health units.

A public launch of the program is expected after mid-October to promote flu vaccination uptake.

Providers wishing to conduct mass (large-scale) influenza community vaccination clinics for all eligible individuals should wait until November to ensure that an adequate supply of vaccine can be ordered.

Submission of reorders may start to be placed at the end of October, with delivery occurring over the subsequent two weeks.

As in previous years, the ministry will be reviewing the 2020/2021 UIIP to inform any program changes for future influenza seasons.

Should you have any questions regarding local distribution and ordering, please contact your local public health unit.

Thank you for efforts and support in the delivery of the 2020-2021 UIIP.

Sincerely,



David C. Williams, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Chief Medical Officer of Health

Attachments:

Health Care Provider Qs & As: Information for the 2020/2021 Influenza Season

Health Care Provider Qs & As: Information for Individuals 6 months to 64 years of age

Health Care Provider Qs & As: Information for Individuals ≥65 years of age