

## Alberta Influenza Immunization Program 2023/2024

Prior to participating in the Alberta Influenza Immunization Program, pharmacy teams must review the posted influenza vaccine biologic pages. Pharmacist participation in the provincially funded influenza immunization program is guided by

- the Alberta Government Immunization Policy (AIP) and the Immunization Regulation, which can be accessed at <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-immunization-policy.aspx>; and
- the biologic pages specific to influenza vaccines, which can be accessed under the Biological Products section of the Alberta Health website at <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-immunization-policy.aspx>

The Alberta Pharmacists' Association is updating the influenza immunization education program titled "The Yearly Booster Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Program 2023-2024." This session should be completed prior to administering influenza vaccine(s). Once available, it will be accessible at <https://rxa.ca/we-educate/onlinelearning/>.

## General Public Program Launch (all pharmacies)

This season's provincially funded Alberta Influenza Immunization Program begins on **October 16, 2023**. Pharmacies **may not administer** influenza vaccines to the general public (no matter the individual's risk) until **October 16, 2023**. Any advertising or promotion of the availability of influenza vaccine for the general public must reference the start date of the program beginning **October 16, 2023**.

- Individuals requesting influenza immunization prior to October 16, 2023, can be immunized using inventory purchased by the pharmacy that is privately paid.

### Outreach Program Launch

The focus of the immunization outreach program is on protecting congregate care residents and staff. Outreach can begin the onsite immunization of residents and staff as soon as influenza vaccine is received. The outreach policy will be posted to the Alberta Government Immunization Policy webpage at the end of June. Staff from senior congregate care settings will reach out to pharmacies directly to request immunization services. Pharmacies are NOT to solicit congregate living settings in order to avoid confusion and/or duplication of services.

Alberta Health is responsible for the allocation of influenza vaccine for

1. pharmacies participating in the Outreach Immunization Program, and
2. the high-dose vaccine for individuals 65 years of age and older for the public program.

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## Vaccine Ordering and Allocation Information

### **Standard dose quadrivalent influenza vaccine (SD-QIV) Vaccine Ordering**

#### **Pipeline (pre-order)**

There will be no allocations provided from Alberta Health for SD-QIV in 2023/2024. Pharmacies will follow their primary wholesale distributors' routine processes during the summer to order the initial pipeline fill of SD-QIV for distribution prior to October 16, 2023.

#### **Routine ordering**

Replenishment orders will begin the week of October 16, 2023. The maximum weekly order amount is 100 units (1,000 doses).

### **High Dose Quadrivalent Influenza Vaccine (HD-QIV) Vaccine Allocation**

#### **Pipeline (allocation)**

The allocations for HD-QIV were determined using the average total of administrated doses of HD-QIV to individuals 65 years of age and older from the 2021/2022 and the 2022/2023 influenza seasons for each pharmacy, using Alberta Blue Cross® claims data. The Alberta Vaccine Inventory (AVI) system was also used to validate vaccine allocations. The amount of HD-QIV vaccine allocated is 40% of the average total administered doses to individuals 65 years of age and older. For newer pharmacies that administered influenza vaccine for the first time during the 2022/2023 season, only the 2022/2023 administration data was used.

As the supply of HD-QIV vaccine is limited, requests for changes in allocation will be considered for the following circumstances:

1. A newer pharmacy that opened since January 2023 with limited influenza vaccine administered.
2. A pharmacy where the patient panel increased unexpectedly (e.g., due to a pharmacy closing).

A review of the allocation can be requested from Alberta Health, using this Google Form by July 30, 2023:

**<https://forms.gle/Lt4CBrAaXmym42ya9>**.

An allocation can be created for new pharmacies with no previous influenza administration history. To submit an allocation request to Alberta Health, use this Google Form by July 30, 2023: **<https://forms.gle/Lt4CBrAaXmym42ya9>**.

The preliminary pharmacy HD-QIV vaccine allocations will be sent to each pharmacy via email to the pharmacy registered users in the AVI starting June 26, 2023. Final allocations will be sent in September.

#### **Pharmacy Notification for HD-QIV Allocation Amount by Email**

The HD-QIV allocation email will contain the total allocation available for the initial HD-QIV vaccine distribution (pipeline preorder) and the primary pharmacy wholesaler for the pharmacy.

If an allocation email is not received by June 30, 2023, please complete the following steps:

1. Check with your AVI registered users to ensure no one received the email.
2. Confirm the email was not moved to a spam or junk mail folder.

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3. Submit an allocation request Alberta Health using this Google Form by July 30, 2023:

**<https://forms.gle/Lt4CBrAaXmym42ya9>.**

If the primary pharmacy wholesaler is incorrect, submit a pharmacy wholesaler change request using the Google Form by July 30, 2023: **<https://forms.gle/Lt4CBrAaXmym42ya9>**.

Alberta Health cannot accommodate allocation requests after July 30, 2023.

**Final allocations** will be shared with pharmacies and the pharmacy's primary wholesaler distributor in September.

**NOTE:**

Pharmacies must order vaccine judiciously. A sufficient supply of vaccine is available for pharmacies; however, not all vaccine comes all at once. The vaccine arrives in the province in a series of shipments. Influenza vaccine is distributed to pharmacies through Pharmacy Wholesale Distributors (PWD) in collaboration with Alberta Health. Influenza vaccine must be ordered in units, not doses.

- One unit is equal to 10 doses for SD-QIV, and
- One unit is equal to five doses for HD-QIV.

Pharmacy wholesale distributors cannot take the vaccine back if errors in ordering occur at the pharmacy level.

**Vaccine allocation for the Alberta Outreach Influenza Immunization program**

Alberta Health Services' Provincial Partner Oversight (PPO) team will lead and coordinate the Alberta Immunization Outreach Program for senior congregate care settings. Owners and operators of senior congregate care settings are responsible for arranging immunization services for residents and staff. Pharmacies that offer immunization services in senior congregate care settings will collaborate with facilities to confirm their participation as the immunization service provider and provide to the facilities requested information to facilitate vaccine distribution. Pharmacies must commit to the roles and responsibilities (posted by end of June) for providers participating in Alberta's Immunization Outreach Program. The allocations will be shared via email as part of the final vaccine allocation in September to each participating pharmacy and the primary pharmacy wholesale distributor to prioritize vaccine delivery.

For PINs and claiming information, please see the Alberta Blue Cross website for the *Reference Guide for Administering and Claiming Influenza Vaccines* and the *Alberta Health Influenza Antiviral Drug Policy as applied to Vulnerable Populations Living in Congregate Living Settings* for additional details.

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# Key updates for this year—COVID-19 vaccine considerations, Alberta Vaccine Inventory Reporting Process, Alberta Vaccine Booking System

## Consideration for spacing Influenza vaccine with COVID-19 vaccine

National guidance on additional COVID-19 vaccine doses for fall/winter are anticipated in the coming months. If additional doses of COVID-19 vaccine are recommended, every opportunity to co-administer influenza and COVID-19 vaccines should be taken. Individuals five years of age and older can receive both vaccines on the same day using different injection sites and separate needles and syringes. A review of the client's immunization record is required prior to administering either vaccine.

## Alberta Vaccine Inventory (AVI) reporting process

To safeguard vaccine accountability and visibility, the AVI system will be used for inventory management for influenza vaccines. AVI enrollment is required to participate in provincially funded vaccine programs. To register or update an AVI account for yourself or your facility, select the Register button on the AVI homepage (<https://vimsavi.alberta.ca/prod/>).

Pharmacies must access the AVI system to receive transfers of vaccine from the pharmacy wholesale distributors (the wholesaler will have 48 business hours to complete the transfer in AVI) and on a weekly basis to reconcile the inventory. A physical count of your on-hand quantities and a reconciliation amount must be completed once a week (ideally by 9 p.m. Mondays) to fulfill required reporting to Alberta Health.

Reconciliation can be done any day of the week EXCEPT Wednesdays and Thursdays. The on-hand quantities reported in AVI will be used to manage vaccine inventory in the province. Accuracy is essential to managing the distribution and allocation of influenza vaccine in the province.

## AVI Compliance and Monitoring

The AVI Responsibilities & Expectations for Compliance document outlines the mandatory weekly AVI responsibilities to receive provincially funded vaccine. If a pharmacy fails to manage and update inventory in AVI, such as receiving transfers and weekly reconciliation, Alberta Health may suspend the pharmacy from participation in the Alberta Immunization Program. This process will be reinstated beginning in July 2023.

Training materials are posted online that review the processes for accessing AVI, receiving transfers and reconciling inventory. Please visit the AVI homepage for all quick reference guides on how to use AVI:

<https://vimsavi.alberta.ca/prod/main.jsp>.

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

