



Health, Seniors and Active Living

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Santé, Aînés et Vie active

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August 25, 2020

To: Assisted Living, Supportive Housing and Long Term Care Facilities

Re: Manitoba's 2020/21 Seasonal Influenza Immunization Program

Immunization against influenza is recommended for all Manitobans 6 months of age and older. It is especially important for those at increased risk of serious illness from the flu, their caregivers and close contacts, including anyone 65 years of age and older.

Although influenza immunization is recommended every year, it is anticipated that during these upcoming fall/winter months, COVID-19 and influenza will be co-circulating. It is therefore vital that seniors, staff, and visitors to assisted living, supportive housing and long-term care facilities be immunized against influenza in order to prevent influenza-like illness and its potential complications.

Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living (MHSAL) is recommending that all assisted living, supportive housing, and long term care facilities consider hosting an on-site influenza immunization clinic to provide the most optimal access to influenza immunizations for residents and staff.

For the 2020/21 influenza season, MHSAL is expanding the high dose influenza vaccine eligibility criteria to include more seniors. The high-dose influenza vaccine will be available for the following individuals who are 65 years of age or older, AND are:

- Residents of long-term care facilities (LTCFs), including chronic care residents, OR
- Residents of supportive and assisted living housing, OR
- Clients in interim/transitional care beds, respite care clients as well as new, unimmunized residents admitted to a LTCF during the flu season, OR
- In a provincial correctional facility, including those who are newly incarcerated or transferred from other federal or out of province correctional facilities, OR
- Receiving homecare services while on a waiting list for admission into a long-term care facility, OR
- Living on a First Nation or remote/isolated community, OR
- Living north of the 53rd parallel of latitude.

Due to limited supplies, the high-dose influenza vaccine will only be shipped to immunization providers who will provide on-site clinics to eligible facilities as listed above, as well as to those providing services to eligible homecare clients, individuals

living in First Nation or remote/isolated communities and those living north of the 53rd parallel.

There are many different types of immunization providers that can offer immunization services, such as public health nurses, pharmacists, physicians and nurse practitioners. The residences/facilities are best positioned to locate an immunization provider to provide the influenza immunization service, however if there are any locations experiencing challenges with locating an immunization provider please contact MHSAL via email at vaccines@gov.mb.ca for assistance.

For more information on Manitoba's Seasonal Influenza Immunization Program, please visit www.Manitoba.ca/flu.

In the coming weeks, there will be updated factsheets and other resources, such as posters, available to order free of charge for health care providers. Please check the *Seasonal Flu – Information for Health Professionals* website at www.gov.mb.ca/health/flu/pro.html to order.

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization has released *Guidance for Influenza Vaccine Delivery in the Presence of COVID-19*, located at www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/guidance-influenza-vaccine-delivery-covid-19.html. This guidance will assist health care providers with advice on how to set up an influenza immunization clinic while adopting the necessary precautions to limit the spread of COVID-19. As these are national guidelines, adjustments may be required to meet provincial guidelines, where necessary.

Please continue to monitor the *Seasonal Flu Vaccine Distribution and Supply* webpage at www.manitoba.ca/fludistribution for any updates to the provincial Program.

If you have any questions regarding this communication, please email vaccines@gov.mb.ca.

Sincerely,

“Original signed by”

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