

Requirements and Considerations for Pharmacist Administration of Publicly Funded Influenza Vaccine During the COVID-19 Pandemic Including in Alternate Locations Separate from the Pharmacy

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The Pharmacy Association of Saskatchewan (PAS) has asked that the locations where pharmacists can administer the publicly funded influenza vaccine be expanded to other locations outside the pharmacy for the 2020-21 Seasonal Influenza Immunization Program. The request reflects the challenges that pharmacies are anticipating in delivery of the vaccine due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Ministry will support this request.

The following items are provided for PAS and pharmacists to use in determining whether pharmacies will choose to establish an alternate location and for the operations of the alternate location.

Requirements:

1. The alternate location must be a vacant storefront in a shopping centre, an open space outside of the pharmacy within a shopping centre, or a vacant building in another location when the alternate location is not in use for other purposes. Other alternate location options may be considered if identified and discussed with the Ministry of Health.
2. The location must have close access to an external entrance. Separate entrance and exit points would **be ideal**.
3. Pharmacies cannot administer publicly funded influenza vaccine or set up a separate location within an operating business.
4. Weather permitting, drive-through and parking lot clinics (also called drive-in clinics) may be used and are particularly useful for people with reduced mobility or those who are apprehensive about a clinic setting.
5. Two metres physical distancing must be ensured at all times between members of the public, and whenever possible, between members of the public and staff. Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) must be donned by the pharmacist. Pharmacies should consider requiring the public to wear masks when attending to receive their influenza immunization.
6. Staff and the public must be screened for COVID-19 before attending the clinic.
7. Processes for managing client flow and crowd control must be developed, implemented, and communicated to the public (or at least to those who book an appointment for their immunization). This is critical for ensuring physical distancing. Visual cues marking two metres distancing and one directional traffic flow through the venue should be considered.
8. Hand washing supplies must be available for staff and clients upon entry and exiting the immunization clinic. Soap and warm water or an alcohol-based Health Canada approved (DIN or NPN) hand sanitizer is appropriate. Signage should be posted encouraging frequent hand hygiene.
9. Cleaning and disinfection of spaces where the public might gather before their appointment must occur according to current guidelines/requirements.
10. Cleaning and disinfection of the immunization space(s) must occur according to current guidelines/requirements.

11. Paper influenza vaccine fact sheets should be avoided. Information should be provided electronically in advance whenever possible. If required, paper sheets should be handed one by one to clients and a disposal bin located toward the clinic exit; there should be no common access displays.
12. Publicly funded high dose influenza vaccine is available for administration ONLY in licensed Personal Care Homes and is not to be offered by pharmacies to the general public.
13. Cold-chain of the vaccine must be maintained and monitored during the clinic (including during transportation to the location).
14. Cold-chain breaks and vaccine wastage must be reported immediately to the Ministry of Health.
15. Pharmacies providing off-site immunizations must follow federal Transportation of Dangerous Goods (TDG) requirements while transporting used inactive influenza vaccine sharps:
 - (b) the dangerous goods are in a means of containment that is in compliance with CGSB-43.125 (a sharps container must be placed within a securely-closed, tear resistant plastic bag within a rigid, leak-proof outer container); and
 - (c) the following information is displayed on the means of containment:
 - (i) the biohazard symbol, and
 - (ii) the word "BIOHAZARD" or "BIORISQUE".

Although not mandatory for the transport of used inactive influenza vaccine sharps, it is recommended that the person transporting these goods take the TDG training for additional support. Training is available at <https://www.saskhealthauthority.ca/news/service-alerts-emergency-events/covid-19/general-info-health-providers>.

TDG training does not apply of pharmacists who are not driving to an alternate location to administer influenza immunizations and returning to the pharmacy by vehicle with used sharps. The TDG Regulations are available at <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2001-286/>.
16. Pharmacies must submit claims for the vaccine and Influenza Immunization Fee on the same day the dose is administered at these locations.
17. Anaphylaxis supplies must be available at these locations.
18. Adverse event following immunization (AEFI) report forms must be available at these locations and submitted to the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) Medical Health Officer for recommendations within 24 hours of the adverse event.
19. A process to document attendees (including location, client name, contact information, and in/out times) at the location on a daily basis must be developed and implemented in order to facilitate contact tracing should a COVID-19 positive client attend the location. This documentation must be made available, upon request by public health, whether the vaccine is administered at the pharmacy or in an alternate location separate from the pharmacy.
20. Pharmacies providing immunizations in alternate locations must provide information to PAS to track these locations (e.g., pharmacy name, location of alternate site, hours/days of operation, etc.). PAS will document this information and provide a list to the Ministry to support evaluation of the provincial program and for any public health measures that may be needed.
21. PAS must provide to the Ministry (including any updates throughout the season):
 - a) the number of pharmacies providing influenza immunizations at alternate locations;
 - b) the supporting information PAS is providing to pharmacists;

- c) a general plan on how pharmacies will operate at an alternate location, including processes and procedures.

The Ministry is also requesting similar information from the SHA public health. This will assist the Ministry with social media and other communications to the public on options available to them.

22. The Ministry retains the right to audit delivery of influenza immunizations by pharmacists at these alternate locations.

Considerations:

1. Selection of a church/religious building for an alternate location requires careful consideration of the capacity and needs of that organization. It is expected that use of a church/religious building would be to offer a clinic that is open to the public and not just for the members of that religious community. The clinic should not be held before or after services, as this may not support appropriate physical distancing and patient flow.
2. Physical accessibility for the public to the location must be considered.
3. Pharmacies should consider requiring that the public make an appointment to receive the vaccine. Appointments should be timed according to the "*Guidance for influenza vaccine delivery in the presence of COVID-19*" issued by National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) to support a reduction in mass gatherings and facilitate distancing and disinfection practices. It is available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/guidance-influenza-vaccine-delivery-covid-19.html>. Walk-ins should be strongly discouraged in order to minimize gathering of larger numbers of individuals. Public messaging on this is important.
4. Organizations such as the Canadian Pharmacists Association and/or the Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada may have guidance or tools for pharmacies on using alternate locations for this year's influenza season.