



Medical Health Officers
UPDATE for Physicians

interior health

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To view previous MHO UPDATES, go to: Interior Health Website www.interiorhealth.ca

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Seasonal Influenza Update

Epidemiology

During the past week in Interior Health (IH), influenza B and influenza A/H3 were reported in addition to cases of A/H1N1. Although influenza A/H1N1 activity continues to decrease, A/H1N1 continues to be the predominant subtype, making up 86% of subtyped influenza viruses in BC. Across Canada, influenza activity decreased slightly and is following a similar trend to the 2012/2013 season but lagging by 2-3 weeks. Adults 20-64 years of age have been the most impacted this season.

Influenza Vaccine

In order to meet the demand for influenza vaccine this year, BCCDC has secured additional injectable influenza vaccine products including XANAFLU® which is being made available to community vaccine providers including physicians in IH. XANAFLU® is the same product as INFLUVAC® which is used on the private market in Canada, and has been purchased in small quantities in prior years in BC as a 'thimerosal free' product for those with hypersensitivity.

XANAFLU® is labelled in German for the non-Canadian market but will be accompanied by documentation to indicate that this vaccine complies with Health Canada approval requirements. Each vaccine order placed with IH will be accompanied by the following:

- A product leaflet attached to the outside of the carton
- A copy of a "Dear Health Professional Letter" from Abbott Laboratories Limited
- BCCDC CD Control Manual, Chapter 2, Immunization Program, Section VII, Biological Products pages 34d & 34e

XANAFLU® is supplied in prefilled syringes in cartons of 10 syringes/box. The syringes are shorter than those used with the Canadian product but are made of the same material, have a Luer lock and no needle provided. The syringe has a 0.25mL demarcation because this product is authorized in Europe for an optional dose of 0.25mL in young children. **However, BCCDC recommends giving a full 0.5 ml dose for all ages.** The full single dose of 0.5mL should be administered to all clients ≥ 6 months of age eligible to receive publicly funded influenza vaccine. The BCCDC Communicable Disease Control Manual, Chapter 2, Immunization Program, Section VII - Biological Products, has been updated with indications for its use in children aged 6 months and older.

For those physicians administering FLUMIST®, please note that BCCDC has updated the indications to reflect that publicly funded FLUMIST® may be used for the Health Canada approved age indications of 2 to 59 years of age.

Please see the BCCDC developed 'Supplemental Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Q&A' available at immunizebc.ca to support use of XANAFLU® and FLUMIST® as outlined above. Full product monographs are also available online on the manufacturers' websites. Physicians are required to place an order for their influenza vaccine using the order form found at the following link: www.interiorhealth.ca > Partners > Immunization Resources & Tools > Immunization Programs > Influenza Immunization Forms. Orders are to be faxed to the local health centre at the number identified on the form, and sent to the attention of the 'Prevention Services Assistant'.

Expanded Coverage of Antivirals

PharmaCare has expanded the coverage criteria for oseltamivir and zanamivir for the 2013/14 influenza season.

In the past, coverage has been limited to individuals of particular ages and health status. The revised criteria for the **2013/14 influenza season** make coverage available to individuals of any age or health status with:

1. Laboratory-confirmed influenza A or B sensitive to oseltamivir and/or zanamivir

OR

1. Signs and symptoms of influenza A or B while influenza is circulating in the community

AND

Whose treatment is initiated **within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms** (as this optimizes the benefits of an antiviral)

The coverage criteria for residential care continues unchanged.

For full criteria, please see www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/sa/criteria/restricted/oseltamivir.html and www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/sa/criteria/restricted/zanamivir.html

Actual coverage is subject to the rules of the patient's PharmaCare plan. For information on PharmaCare plans, visit www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/plans/index.html

Infection Control Precautions

If a patient has an influenza-like illness, or is suspected of having influenza, including H1N1, droplet precautions should be applied. The application of droplet precautions does not need to wait for laboratory confirmation of the diagnosis.

Enhanced Surveillance of Severe Influenza Cases

Effective January 27th, enhanced surveillance of hospitalized influenza cases through completion of provincial severe case report forms was no longer required. This initiative has supported real time risk assessment, public health response, and assessment of operational and resource needs. The data suggested a disproportionate burden of severe influenza in middle age adults and those with co-morbidity. Thank-you for your efforts in supporting this important surveillance program.