

August 26, 2019

To: All Health Care Practitioners

Subject: Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Program 2019-20

Dear Colleagues,

Seasonal influenza poses serious health risks to the elderly, the very young, and those with weakened immune systems and/or other chronic health conditions. The single most effective way of reducing the impact of seasonal influenza, especially for those most at risk of complications, is immunization.

For the 2019-2020 influenza season, the Department of Health will be offering a quadrivalent influenza vaccine which provides protection against four different influenza viruses: two influenza A viruses and two influenza B viruses. Vaccine is expected to arrive around the end of September and distribution to health providers will start in October. Please note that any delays from the manufacturer can affect the timing of product arriving in New Brunswick. The Central Serum Depot receives a percentage of the overall influenza vaccine order for the season in three or more shipments over several weeks, so you will not receive 100% of your vaccine order in the beginning.

To assist you in your practice, we have attached the "Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Information for Immunization Providers". This document is intended to provide answers to you and your clients' questions specific to the 2019-2020 seasonal influenza vaccine and pneumococcal vaccine. It incorporates the 2019-2020 NACI statement and the policies and standards outlined in the New Brunswick Immunization Program Guide. We hope that it is a useful resource. It can be found online at:

https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/ocmoh/for_healthprofessionals/cdc.html

The Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH) has compiled a report on the 2018-2019 New Brunswick Influenza Activity which includes highlights of the influenza season and data pertaining to laboratory, nursing home outbreaks, and associated hospitalizations which is posted on our website at:

https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/en/CDC/Influenza/2018-2019_NB-Influenza-Activity-Summary-Report.pdf . A copy of this report is attached for your information.

For ongoing information on influenza activity, please see our weekly New Brunswick influenza report which is posted on our website at:

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/ocmoh/cdc/content/influenza/influenza_surveillance_activities.html.

We also encourage practitioners to assess their clients' needs for publicly funded pneumococcal vaccine, as per the eligibility criteria, at the same time they receive seasonal influenza vaccine.

We would like to take the time to thank you for your continued support in providing seasonal influenza and pneumococcal vaccine to the New Brunswick population.

Sincerely,



Shelley Landsburg, BNRN MPH
Director
Disease Prevention and Control