



September 6, 2022

Dear Colleagues,

Seasonal influenza poses serious health risks to the elderly, the very young, and those with weakened immune systems or other chronic health conditions. With the 2022-2023 Influenza season approaching we are requesting your assistance once again to prevent and control influenza in New Brunswick.

The NB Influenza vaccine program eligibility for 2022-2023 influenza season includes:

Quadrivalent influenza vaccine - individuals aged 6 months and older including residents of long-term care facilities under the age of 65 years. Quadrivalent vaccine provides protection against four different influenza viruses: two influenza A viruses and two influenza B viruses.

Fluzone® High-Dose Quadrivalent - individuals 65 years and older. High Dose Influenza Vaccine is a Quadrivalent inactivated influenza vaccine that is licensed specifically for people 65 years and older. The high dose vaccine has four times the concentration of influenza virus antigen as the standard inactivated influenza vaccine which is intended to give the older people a stronger immune response, and therefore, better protection against influenza. The Fluzone® High-Dose Quadrivalent is not licensed for under 65 years of age and is not publicly funded for any other indication (ex: immunocompromised client)

It is important to respect the eligibility criteria as vaccine supply is based on specific cohort populations and if given outside the criteria, we may not have sufficient supply available to give to those who are eligible and at higher risk of more severe outcomes.

### Processes for Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Ordering and Distribution

New Brunswick's influenza vaccine is expected to arrive in October. All orders will be reviewed to ensure equitable distribution to all health care providers. Priority groups will be established for supply distribution to ensure that individuals at highest risk receive vaccine first (i.e. hospitals, long-term facilities, etc.).

Note that, manufacturers supply chain issues such as shortages or delays in the delivery of their vaccines are beyond the control of the provinces and territories. To allow for sufficient time to deliver this year's influenza vaccine to your facility/clinic, we encourage that you **do not schedule your immunization clinics before you have received the vaccine**. Also, New Brunswick receives a percentage of the overall influenza vaccine order for the season **in four or more** shipments over several weeks, so you will **not** receive 100% of your vaccine order in the beginning.



Influenza Vaccine Ordering process	
Immunization provider	Where to order influenza vaccine
Health care practitioners (physicians, nurse practitioners, midwives, and community health centres) serviced by a sub-depot for routine vaccine deliveries.	This group of health care practitioners send orders to their applicable sub-depots
	These sub-depots enter orders in the Public Health Information Solution (PHIS) through Product Requisition
All Health care practitioners (physicians, nurse practitioners, midwives and community health centres) in areas not serviced by a sub-depot	The product is distributed from McKesson to subdepots for pick-up
	This group of health care practitioners send orders to local Regional Public Health (PH) Offices as per usual process. The PH offices enter orders in PHIS through Product Requisition.
	The product is distributed from McKesson to Regional Public Health office for pickup as per usual process

## Vaccine records

### Requirement for Submitting Influenza Vaccine Administration to Medicare

As per the *Public Health Act*, all immunizers of publicly funded vaccines must document the immunization within one week of administration and provide the patient a copy of the immunization records. To meet this requirement, Physicians and Nurse Practitioners participating in delivery of the influenza program need to submit influenza vaccine administration billing information to Medicare as soon as possible within one week of the clients' receipt of vaccine. The Medicare system sends this immunization information directly to the Public Health Information Solution (PHIS). It is important to ensure that the vaccine information is accurate as this becomes a client's official immunization record in the immunization registry.

In addition, this data is necessary to accurately inform the Minister and New Brunswick population of the progress of the influenza campaign in a timely manner. This will be monitored to ensure participants are providing the required data in the specified time.

## Vaccine Resources

To assist you in your immunization practice, the Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Information for Immunization Providers is available. This document provides answers to you and your clients' questions specific to the 2022-2023 seasonal influenza vaccine and pneumococcal vaccine. It incorporates the [2022-2023 NACI Statement](#), the policies and standards outlined in the New Brunswick Immunization Program Guide, and information on ordering and distribution.

It is critical that vaccine potency is protected by always maintaining cold chain. Health care practitioners who are receiving influenza vaccines must have proper vaccine storage equipment in place, i.e. a temperature-monitored purpose- built vaccine refrigerator. As per 2021 memo, this will be a requirement for all health care practitioners. Refer to New Brunswick Immunization Program Guide (gnb.ca) (NBIPG) [Standard 3.4-Storage and Handling](#) for storage and handling of 2°C to 8°C vaccines or the current National Vaccine Storage and Handling Guidelines for Immunization Providers for specific requirements for cold chain management, vaccine storage, temperature monitoring and transportation requirements.

If clinic supplies are needed for vaccine administration, please order through channels previously established for COVID-19.

We appreciate and thank you for your collaboration in the influenza campaign.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shelley Landsburg', is positioned above the typed name.

Shelley Landsburg, BNRN  
MPH Director  
Prevention and Control Branch