

Alberta COVID-19 Pharmacy Immunization Program (ACPIP) update—March 15, 2021

Updates

Pre-filling syringes: The process of pre-filling syringes with COVID-19 vaccine is NOT a supported practice for ACPIP community pharmacies. Pharmacists are to draw up vaccine at the time of each administration.

On-location pharmacy administration: ACPIP participating pharmacies must ONLY administer the COVID-19 vaccine within their pharmacy location. Due to stability concerns of mRNA vaccines, 'off-site' vaccine administration is not permitted.

Phase 1A eligible individuals: As a reminder, individuals asking to be immunized who were eligible in Phase 1A (i.e. respiratory therapists, health-care workers in ICU, emergency departments and medical units and paramedics and emergency medical responders, etc.) should continue to book appointments with Alberta Health Services. Pharmacies should be referring these individuals accordingly.

Phase 2 (Group A) eligibility

Starting March 15, Alberta will move into Phase 2A of the COVID-19 vaccine program. Albertans who meet the following criteria will be able to book appointments, starting March 15:

- Albertans 65 years of age and older in the community (born in 1956 or earlier);
- First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) people aged 50 and older, no matter where they live (born in 1971 or earlier); and
- staff of licensed supportive living not included in Phase 1.

In order for the pharmacy to ensure eligibility for the COVID-19 vaccine, please see the following information regarding FNMI individuals and staff of licensed supportive living facilities.

FNMI (First Nations, Métis, Inuit): The booking of appointments will be based on the self-identification of the individual. At the time of the appointment, only identification that includes the individual's birth date will be required. Examples include driver's licence, passport, Alberta Health Care card or FNMI status or identification card.

Licensed supportive living staff: The booking of appointments will be based on the self-identification of the individual. At the time of appointment, identification that includes their birth date **AND** proof of employment from a licensed supportive living facility **must** be provided. Examples include an ID badge, Contract Provider Identification Card, professional affiliation card or a letter from an employer including the name of the staff member. Administration of the COVID-19 vaccine **must** be completed within the community pharmacy.

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PHARMACY BENEFACT

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Phase 2 (Group B and C)

On March 15, 2021, information about Phase 2 (Group B and C) of the COVID-19 vaccine program was announced. The phased approach to the COVID-19 vaccination program is designed to protect those at high risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19, and those who interact with them, like health care workers and support staff.

Phase 2B and 2C are expected to begin sometime in April. The exact timing will depend on vaccine supply and will be announced closer to the start of each phase.

Pharmacies should not be pre-booking appointments for patients eligible in Phase 2B and 2C at this time.

Alberta Health reminds pharmacies that an orderly rollout of vaccine to eligible populations is critical to ensuring that the projected timelines for immunization based on vaccine supply can be met. Further instructions on when to begin booking appointments for phases 2B and 2C will follow in the days ahead.

Phase 2B

Community pharmacies will be immunizing Albertans with underlying health conditions who are most at risk of severe outcomes. A list of the associated underlying health conditions eligible under Phase 2B is available at [Alberta.ca](https://alberta.ca). These health conditions were chosen as they are the ones that were associated with a higher risk of death or hospitalization for those under the age of 64 and were recommended by the Alberta Advisory Committee on Immunization and affirmed by the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Eligible Albertans age 16 and older with at least one of the underlying health conditions will be able to get the vaccine. The age range has been dropped from 18 to 16 years of age as the Pfizer vaccine is licensed to immunize persons 16 years of age or older. When Phase 2B begins, only pharmacies administering the Pfizer vaccine will be able to immunize those 16 and 17 years of age. Albertans must be 18 years of age to be immunized with the Moderna vaccine at this time.

Alberta will operate on the honour system for Phase 2B. Community pharmacists will not be required to confirm if an Albertan fulfills the high-risk criteria.

Phase 2C

Phase 2C will offer the vaccine to

- residents (regardless of age) and staff linked to eligible congregate living settings: correctional facilities, homeless shelters, meatpacking plants, group homes, including disability, mental health and other types of licensed supportive living;
- health care workers providing direct and acute patient care who have a high potential for spread to high-risk individuals; and
- caregivers of Albertans who are most at risk of severe outcomes.

Workers eligible in this phase will need to provide personal identification that contains a birth date and proof of employment or professional registration (i.e., employee ID card, letter of employment or placement) when booking or attending their appointments with Alberta Health Services or at community pharmacies.

For assistance with benefit or claim inquiries, please contact an Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy Services Provider Relations contact centre representative at

780-498-8370 (Edmonton and area)

403-294-4041 (Calgary and area)

1-800-361-9632 (toll free)

FAX 780-498-8406 (Edmonton and area)

FAX 1-877-305-9911 (toll free)

Alberta Blue Cross offers online access to current Pharmacy Benefacts and supplemental claiming information to assist with the submission of your direct bill drug claims.

Visit ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-home.php

