



TITLE

COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

SCOPE

Provincial

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NOTE: The first appearance of terms in bold in the body of this document (except titles) are defined terms – please refer to the Definitions section.

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OBJECTIVES

- To minimize serious illness and overall deaths while minimizing societal disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To provide a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine for all Albertans for whom the vaccine is licensed and recommended.
- To allocate, distribute, and administer the COVID-19 vaccine as efficiently, equitably, and effectively as possible.
- To monitor the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines.

PRINCIPLES

- Alberta Health Services (AHS) supports providing the COVID-19 vaccine to **patients** (inclusive of **health practitioners**, contracted service providers, and members of the public) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals are strongly encouraged to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.
- This Policy is based on information included in the Alberta Health Services [Immunization Program Standards Manual \(IPSM\)](#).
- The COVID-19 vaccine shall be offered to all Albertans in accordance with the phased immunization program developed by the Government of Alberta, and in accordance with the [Appropriate Prioritization of Access to Health Services Policy](#).

- AHS will be administering COVID-19 vaccines from a number of different manufacturers. These different vaccines may have different storage, handling, and administration instructions as outlined in the specific COVID-19 vaccine monographs.

APPLICABILITY

Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).

ELEMENTS

1. COVID-19 Immunization

- 1.1 Administration of the COVID-19 vaccine shall be offered to patients who meet the eligibility criteria set out in Section 3 of this Policy.
- 1.2 Health practitioners are encouraged to be immunized with the COVID-19 vaccine, when available for them. Health practitioners are encouraged to report their immunization to Workplace Health and Safety for reporting and outbreak management purposes.
- 1.3 The COVID-19 vaccine is being rolled-out in phases as directed by the Government of Alberta. Only individuals identified in the current COVID-19 vaccine roll-out phase are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, unless otherwise directed by the Government of Alberta.
 - a) **Health care providers** administering the COVID-19 vaccine shall confirm the individual is eligible to receive the vaccine during that roll-out phase (e.g., verbal confirmation of eligibility, confirming age through patient identification, patient provision of booking confirmation email).
 - b) Depending on the available supply and distribution considerations for the COVID-19 vaccine, the Government of Alberta may prioritize the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine to identified populations with the greatest need within the active phase. When this occurs, only those individuals identified by Alberta Health shall be immunized.
- 1.4 AHS Public Health is responsible for the COVID-19 immunization program during phase one (1) and phase two (2) of the vaccine roll-out. Public Health shall:
 - a) ensure that COVID-19 vaccines maintain potency through optimal transportation, storage, and handling practices (see Section 4 below);
 - b) deliver immunizations to eligible individuals at public health clinics and at other immunizing locations;
 - c) adhere to the guidelines outlined in Alberta Health's [Immunization Policy](#);

- d) provide information for patient registration and participation in Canadian National Vaccine Safety Network (CANVAS) surveys/research (patient participation is voluntary);
 - e) maintain immunization records (see Section 6 below); and
 - f) monitor and report **adverse events following immunization** as per the Alberta Health [COVID-19 Vaccine: Active Surveillance and Reporting of Adverse Events Following Immunization \(AEFI\)](#) Policy (see Section 7 below).
- 1.5 Informed consent shall be obtained from patients in accordance with AHS' [Consent to Treatment/Procedure\(s\) Policy](#) and procedures prior to providing immunization services.

2. Authorized Personnel

- 2.1 COVID-19 immunizations shall be administered by a health care provider who:
- a) is a regulated member of a health profession under the *Health Professions Act* (Alberta) and is authorized under the respective statute and regulations to administer the vaccine; or
 - b) has been authorized to administer the COVID-19 vaccine by a Ministerial Order or an Order of the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Alberta.
- 2.2 **Students** of a health profession may administer the COVID-19 vaccine provided they meet the criteria and act in compliance with legislation applicable to this restricted activity.
- 2.3 Health care providers who administer immunizations shall demonstrate competence in the COVID-19 vaccine administration and management of anaphylaxis related to immunization after receiving the appropriate didactic and clinical education and training [recording session](#) and [PowerPoint](#). Further information can be found on the online [COVID-19 Webpage](#) and the [COVID-19 Health Professional Immunization Information Webpage](#) and includes, but is not limited to:
- a) [Immunization Programs Standards Manual](#) (IPSM);
 - b) [Standard on Vaccine Storage and Handling](#);
 - c) the AHS COVID-19 Vaccine Biological Pages for the vaccine being administered;
 - d) the COVID-19 Vaccine Product Monograph for the vaccine being administered;
 - e) the [COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet](#); and

- f) recognition of and response to anaphylaxis.
- 2.4 The health care provider administering the vaccine shall be aware of and comply with the [Appropriate Prioritization of Access to Health Services Policy](#). **Preferential access** to COVID-19 immunization is strictly prohibited.
- a) Any diluted COVID-19 vaccine left over at the end of the day shall be managed in accordance with direction from the Government of Alberta. All efforts shall be made to reduce or eliminate vaccine wastage.
- b) Questions regarding the ethical management of decisions regarding priority of access can be directed to the [Clinical Ethics Department](#).
- c) Any allegations of preferential access shall be reported and managed in accordance with the [Appropriate Prioritization of Access to Health Services Policy](#) and the [Whistleblower Policy](#).
- 3. Assessment of Patient Eligibility**
- 3.1 All patients shall have their COVID-19 immunization history and eligibility assessed by the health care provider at point of care.
- 3.2 All assessments shall include consideration of contraindications to immunization.
- 3.3 A patient is eligible for COVID-19 immunization if:
- a) they meet the age requirements specific to the COVID-19 vaccine being provided;
- b) they meet any residency requirements set out by Alberta Health;
- c) they are identified in the active COVID-19 vaccine roll-out phase (see Sections 1.3);
- d) they have not already received the required number of doses of the COVID-19 vaccine; and
- e) the vaccine is available.
- 3.4 The health care provider who will be administering the vaccine shall assess documented immunization history for an administered dose of COVID-19 vaccine including:
- a) checking patient's personal immunization record;
- b) checking electronic databases;
- c) contacting the patient's most responsible health practitioner; and/or
- d) contacting Public Health.

4. Vaccine Storage and Handling

- 4.1 Public Health and those administering the vaccine shall follow provincial vaccine cold chain and handling standards as outlined in the [Immunization Program Standards Manual \(IPSM\)](#), [Standard on Vaccine Storage and Handling](#), the Government of Alberta's [Alberta Vaccine Storage and Handling for COVID-19 Vaccine Policy](#), and any specific storage and handling requirements set out by the vaccine manufacturer (in accordance with direction provided by Alberta Health).

5. Vaccine Administration

- 5.1 Health care providers shall follow the [Immunization Program Standards Manual \(IPSM\)](#), [Standard for the Administration of Immunizations](#).

6. Documentation

- 6.1 Assessment and immunization reporting events shall be reported in accordance with the [Immunization Regulation](#) (Alberta) (see the Alberta Health [More Information about the Immunization Regulation](#) guide for more information).
- 6.2 The immunization shall be documented in the patient's **health record** by the health care provider who administered the vaccine. Document the immunization in patient's health record and local electronic database (if applicable). Documentation shall include at least:
- a) patient's full name;
 - b) Personal Health Number (PHN) or Unique Lifetime Identifier (ULI);
 - c) date of birth;
 - d) gender;
 - e) postal code;
 - f) vaccine name (brand name);
 - g) manufacturer lot number;
 - h) dosage administered;
 - i) reason code;
 - j) date and time of immunization;
 - k) site of injection;
 - l) route of administration; and,

- m) name and professional designation of health care provider administering the vaccine.
- 6.3 Reason coding shall be documented to report why the patient has received vaccine. There are multiple reason codes for the COVID-19 vaccine and patients receiving vaccine shall be categorized based on the appropriate code.
- 6.4 Patient shall receive a written or electronic immunization record of the vaccine administered.
- 7. Adverse Event Following Immunization (AEFI) Reporting**
- 7.1 All **AHS settings** that provide immunizations shall have a process in place for management of anaphylaxis related to administration of immunization in accordance with the [Anaphylaxis Management: Administration of Intramuscular Epinephrine Policy](#) and [Anaphylaxis Management: Registered Nurse \(RN\) Prescribing and Administering Intramuscular Epinephrine Clinical Support Tool Protocol](#).
- 7.2 Health care providers shall be trained to be able to respond to any anaphylaxis following immunization (e.g., completion of the [Anaphylaxis Management: Administration of Intramuscular Epinephrine Learning Module](#) and examination).
- 7.3 Anaphylaxis medical supplies shall be immediately available and prepared for usage prior to any immunizations being administered.
- 7.4 The health care provider shall report any adverse event following immunization that is disclosed or reported to them by a patient following COVID-19 immunization to the Alberta Health Services Provincial AEFI Team as outlined in the [Immunization Program Standards Manual \(IPSM\)](#).

DEFINITIONS

Adverse event following immunization (AEFI) means an unfavourable health occurrence experience by a patient that:

- Follows immunization;
- Cannot be attributed to a pre-existing condition; and
- Meets one or more of the following as determined by a health practitioner:
 - A life-threatening health occurrence that requires hospitalization or urgent medical attention.
 - The health occurrence is unusual or unexpected that:
 - Has not previously been identified; or
 - Has been previously identified but has increased frequency.
 - The health occurrence cannot be explained by the patient's medical history, recent disease or illness or consumption of medication.

Alberta Health Services setting means any environment where treatment/procedures and other health services are delivered by, on behalf of or in conjunction with, Alberta Health Services.

Health care provider means any person who provides goods or services to a patient, inclusive of health care professionals, staff, students, volunteers and other persons acting on behalf of or in conjunction with Alberta Health Services.

Health practitioner means hospital employees, Midwives, Physicians, and other staff who work or study in hospitals (e.g., students in health care disciplines, contract workers, volunteers) and other health care personnel (e.g., those working in clinical laboratories, nursing homes, home care agencies and community settings) who are at risk of exposure to communicable diseases because of their contact with patients (diagnosed or undiagnosed) or their environment.

Health record means the collection of all records documenting individually identifying health information in relation to a single person.

Patient means an adult or child who receives or has requested health care or services from Alberta Health Services and its health care providers or individuals authorized to act on behalf of Alberta Health Services. This term is inclusive of residents, clients and outpatients.

Preferential access means inappropriate priority of access to publicly-funded health services managed by Alberta Health Services that is a result of, including but not limited to, a conscious granting to one person over another with greater health need, without supporting evidence or justification; the application of one's position, power, authority, or relationship with AHS personnel that negatively affects another individual's extent of care or timeliness of service provision; or purposeful efforts to manipulate one's eligibility, availability, wait list status or extent of service provision for reasons other than health need and/or clinical urgency.

Student means those individuals enrolled in an entry-level health care discipline education program leading to initial entry-to-practice as a regulated or non-regulated health care provider.

REFERENCES

- Alberta Health Services Governance Documents:
 - [Anaphylaxis Management: Administration of Intramuscular Epinephrine Policy](#) (#HCS-223)
 - [Anaphylaxis Management: Registered Nurse \(RN\) Prescribing and Administering Intramuscular Epinephrine Clinical Support Tool Protocol](#) (#HCS-223-01)
 - [Appropriate Prioritization of Access to Health Services Policy](#) (#1167)
 - [Consent to Treatment/Procedure\(s\) Policy and procedures](#) (#PRR-01)
 - [Whistleblower Policy](#) (#1101)
- Alberta Health Services Forms:
 - [Consent for COVID-19 Immunization](#) (#21765)
 - [COVID-19 Client Immunization Record and Care After Immunization](#) (#21763)
 - [COVID-19 Immunization Record](#) (#21221)
- Alberta Health Services Resources:
 - [Immunization Program Standards Manual](#)
 - [Standard for the Administration of Immunizations](#)
 - [Standard on Vaccine Storage and Handling](#)
- Non-Alberta Health Services Documents:
 - [Adverse Events Following Immunization \(AEFI\) Policy for Alberta Immunization Providers](#) (Alberta Health)

- [Alberta Immunization Policy](#) (Alberta Health)
- [Alberta Vaccine Storage and Handling for COVID-19 Vaccine](#) Policy (Alberta Health)
- [Alberta Vaccine Storage and Handling Policy for Provincially Funded Vaccine](#) (Alberta Health)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine: Active Surveillance and Reporting of Adverse Events Following Immunization \(AEFI\)](#) (Alberta Health)
- [Government Organization Act](#) (Alberta)
- [Guidelines for Medication and Vaccine Injection Safety](#) (College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta)
- [Health Professions Act](#) (Alberta)
- [Immunization Regulation](#) (Alberta)

Some links will require AHS credentials to view.

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