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The Alberta Health Services (AHS) program launch for the 2011-2012 influenza immunization program season is October 17, 2011. On or after that date all Albertans will be able to access free seasonal influenza vaccine through various venues such as: community physician offices, Primary Care Networks, pharmacies and workplace settings, public health mass immunization clinics, and public health offices. Prior to the October 17 launch date, AHS will target influenza immunization efforts toward high risks groups such as health care and long term care workers, residents in facility or congregate living, individuals aged 65 and older, and children 6 to 23 months of age.

Alberta Health Services (AHS) has been advised by Alberta Health and Wellness (AHW) to anticipate receiving provincially funded seasonal influenza vaccine in late September or early October, 2011 with up to 50% of the vaccine from the AHW Provincial Vaccine Depot in the initial delivery. The remainder of the vaccine will arrive in subsequent deliveries spread over a one month time period. As such community providers can anticipate receiving up to 50% of their vaccine order by October 17, 2011 and the remainder in shipments spaced out over the following month.

Workplace Influenza Immunization Program Q&A

Q. As a community provider am I able to access provincially funded influenza vaccine to take to worksites that have contracted my services?

A. Yes. Community providers may take provincially-funded influenza vaccine off site to administer in a workplace setting. However, community providers must not charge a fee to any individual receiving provincially funded influenza immunization for the vaccine or for the immunization service. In order to recoup costs for providing workplace influenza immunization services community providers may negotiate and charge the employer for the service only, not for the vaccine.

Vaccine and Supply Chain Update

- Alberta Health Services (AHS) has been advised that the province will receive fewer doses of Agriflu™ than originally planned and therefore community providers may receive either Agriflu™ or Fluviral™. The total number of doses influenza vaccine available in Alberta remains unchanged and there will be ample supply for distribution this fall.
- Community providers can anticipate receiving influenza vaccine in order to begin immunizing on the October 17, 2011 launch date.

Planning Update

- AHS is awaiting receipt of this year's Influenza Immunization Policy from AHW and once received will post the 2011-2012 Vaccine Agreement on-line on the AHS web-site. The target date for the agreement to be available on-line is now the end of August 2011.
- The 2011-2012 Seasonal Influenza Immunization Orientation power point presentation and the Influenza Training Workbook are currently under revision.
 - Community providers will be able to access these educational resources on the AHS influenza information web-site once revised.

Alberta pharmacists can access a link to the AHS influenza web-site at either the Alberta College of Pharmacists web-site or the Alberta Pharmacists Association web-site. Physicians can access a link to the AHS web-site at the College of Physicians and Surgeons web-site.