Influenza has arrived in Alberta
Albertans not yet immunized are at risk for disease

FORT MCMURRAY – Influenza has arrived in Alberta, and Alberta Health Services (AHS) is reminding Albertans who have not yet been immunized this season that without immunization, they are at risk.

"Cases we had seen initially were what we considered sporadic. This has now changed," says Dr. Gerry Predy, AHS' Senior Medical Officer of Health. "The level of influenza activity in the community we're seeing now – including reported outbreak activity – tells us that influenza season has begun."

As of November 15, there have been 219 individual cases of influenza confirmed in Alberta, including 69 hospitalized cases and seven deaths. Three outbreaks have been reported in Alberta in November.

More than 926,500 doses of influenza vaccine have been administered to Albertans this season, as of November 15. While this is a good start, thousands of Albertans remain without protection.

"Uptake of influenza vaccine has been impressive so far, but we're certainly not where we want to be yet," says Dr. Predy. "It takes two weeks after being immunized to be fully protected. With the virus already circulating, Albertans need to act now: get immunized to protect yourself and reduce the further spread of disease in our province."

Through AHS influenza immunization clinics, as well as pharmacies and physician offices around Alberta, vaccine remains easily accessible, free of charge, to all Albertans six months of age and older.

For complete AHS influenza immunization clinic schedules, Albertans can visit www.albertahealthservices.ca/influenza or call Health Link Alberta at 1-866-408-5465. Albertans intending to visit a pharmacy or physician office for immunization are reminded to call ahead, before visiting, to confirm vaccine availability.

"To those of you who have been immunized – thank you", says Dr. Predy. "To those of you who have not yet been immunized, do not delay. Get immunized and get protected today."

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than four million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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