

Date: November 4, 2009
To: AHS Staff and Physicians
From: Todd Gilchrist, Vice President, Workplace Health, Safety and Employee Wellness
Re: Dispensing Antiviral Medication to Health Care Workers and Physicians

This memorandum outlines a process for how health care workers in Alberta can access antiviral medication for early treatment of Influenza-like illness (ILI) *without charge*. Alberta Health Services (AHS) has agreed to supply antiviral medications to *all* health care workers (defined below) with ILI, including those with mild to moderate disease.

The process for distribution of antiviral medication may differ between various parts of the province due to staffing levels and available clinics and services. The importance of early treatment must be emphasized since Tamiflu (oseltamivir) becomes less effective after 48 hours from the onset of symptoms.

Health care workers are, for the purposes of this process, defined to include all workers in the employ of AHS; those contracted by AHS or working in facilities contracted by AHS; professional staff appointed to AHS; and those providing medical care in community settings.

This includes workers in:

- Acute Care Facilities
- Outpatient Clinics
- Long Term, Continuing, and Home Care
- Community physicians and their office staff
- Public Health Clinics
- Emergency Medical Services
- Where someone with, or potentially with pandemic (H1N1) may present or be cared for

Health care workers may access antiviral medications via any of the following methods:

- AHS Influenza Assessment Centres (where activated). These centres are staffed by physicians and registered nurses, and will have antiviral medication available.
- Obtain a prescription for antiviral medication from family physicians, drop-in clinics or Emergency Departments. The prescription can then filled (free-of-charge) through community pharmacies.
- In the Edmonton, Calgary and Red Deer areas, antiviral medication will also be available through the AHS Occupational Health and Safety Office, during office hours and as OH&S staff availability allows.

Please note that current legislation and the regulations of the various health-related Colleges require that a prescription written by a physician, or in some circumstances, an order provided by a physician be obtained, before medication can be dispensed.

An algorithm of the process is attached in the appendix to this memo.

Workers experiencing adverse affects from the medication are advised to call Alberta Health Link or the originator of the prescription to report their condition and obtain instruction on how to proceed.

If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact your AHS Zone WHS&EW Leader

Appendix One

Antiviral Assessment and Prescription Algorithm

