

October 7, 2021

Provision of Antiviral Medication during Influenza Outbreaks – Edmonton Zone

Dear Community Pharmacist,

Re: Provision of antiviral medication during influenza outbreaks for:

- **All residents living in Long Term Care (LTC) and Congregate Living Settings (CLS) including lodges, manors, seniors' residences, and designated supportive living facilities.**
- **Unimmunized staff working in Long Term Care and Congregate Living Settings**

Over the next several weeks, in preparation for the upcoming influenza season, your pharmacy may be receiving advance antiviral prophylaxis prescriptions from prescribers for residents living in congregate living sites.

Please do not dispense prescriptions until you are notified of a laboratory-confirmed influenza outbreak by the Alberta Health Services (AHS), Edmonton Zone Medical Officer of Health (MOH) or Communicable Disease Control (CDC) nursing team, or by the facility.

When an influenza outbreak is declared at a congregate living site, the MOH recommends that all residents, whether immunized or not, receive oseltamivir antiviral prophylaxis. Unimmunized staff are also required to take antiviral prophylaxis if they are working during the outbreak. Community pharmacies will receive notification of a confirmed influenza outbreak by fax from the Edmonton MOH (notification will include facility name, outbreak [EI] number, and influenza type [A or B]). **In the event you do not receive this notification, you must contact the outbreak facility directly and speak to the outbreak site designate to gather the necessary information (outbreak [EI] number, and influenza type [A or B] or any other information you may require).**

- ***Following a notification of a laboratory-confirmed influenza outbreak at a site, please dispense advance prescriptions for antiviral prophylaxis as soon as possible, and deliver resident antiviral medications, as appropriate. You will receive notification from the Edmonton Zone MOH.***
- At the time of an influenza outbreak, you may receive prescriptions for antiviral **prophylaxis** for residents **without** advance prescriptions and also for unimmunized staff working at the outbreak site. You may also receive prescriptions for antiviral **treatment** for symptomatic residents.

Alberta Influenza Antiviral Drug Policy

The **Alberta Influenza Antiviral Drug Policy as Applied to Vulnerable Populations Living in Congregate Living Settings (CLS)** defines who is eligible for provincially funded antiviral medication during influenza outbreaks.

- **This policy applies to residents of CLS only**
 - Pharmacies that fill prescriptions for antiviral prophylaxis under this policy are compensated under Alberta Blue Cross as per their Pharmacy Benefact; the resident does not have to pay for antiviral medication (prophylaxis or treatment doses).
- **The following individuals are not eligible for publicly funded antiviral medication under this policy:**

- Residents of LTC facilities (including nursing homes and auxiliary hospitals) and patients in a hospital;
 - Residents of LTC are covered under the Nursing Homes Act and the Hospitals Act and patients admitted to hospital are covered under the Hospitals Act
- Health care workers (HCWs) working in a CLS, LTC facility, or hospital;
 - Although HCWs (employees or volunteers) are not eligible for **publicly funded** antiviral medication, unimmunized staff should still take antiviral prophylaxis if they are working during the outbreak. Their employer must have a process in place in regards to coverage of cost of antiviral prophylaxis.

Important Things to Note

- Any resident without an Alberta Personal Health Number is also covered by this policy (**Please refer to the Pharmacy Benefact for additional information**). Please ensure you are a party to the Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy Agreement prior to submitting the prescribed Antivirals Dispensing claims. For individuals eligible for publicly funded antiviral prophylaxis, please ensure to include the EI number.
- Refer to the current Tamiflu (Roche Canada) product monograph for Tamiflu dosing recommendations.
- Covenant Health OHS and Alberta Health Services WHS have a process in place for staff requiring antiviral prophylaxis. Covenant and AHS Staff will be advised to contact their respective OHS/WHS department at the time of an influenza outbreak for assessment and advice. Staff working at all other LTC and congregate facilities should contact their OHS/WHS designate.
- **If you have questions about billing, you must contact Alberta Blue Cross directly.**

If you have clinical questions, please contact Communicable Disease Control, Edmonton Zone at 1-888-522-1919 or email CDOutbreak@albertahealthservices.ca. When calling, please indicate that you are calling about Edmonton Zone advance antiviral prophylaxis prescriptions for influenza outbreaks.

Thank you for your continued assistance and co-operation.

Chris Sikora MD MSc MPH CCFP FRCPC
Lead Medical Officer of Health – Edmonton Zone
Alberta Health Services