

Community Pharmacist Provision of Antiviral Medication During Influenza Outbreaks

Community Pharmacists

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 of:

- continuing care home (CCH), formerly long-term care (now Type A CCH) and designated supportive living (now Type B CCH); and
- supportive living accommodation (SLA), for example, a lodge, manor, and seniors' residence.

Please do not dispense these advance prescriptions until you are notified of a laboratory-confirmed influenza outbreak by the Alberta Health Services (AHS) Medical Officer of Health (MOH), or Communicable Disease Control (CDC) nursing outbreak 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. You may receive notification of a confirmed outbreak directly from a facility, the MOH, or the CDC outbreak team. **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.**

- 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.
- At the time of an influenza outbreak, you may receive prescriptions for antiviral **prophylaxis for residents without advance-prescriptions** and for unimmunized staff working at the outbreak site. You may also receive prescriptions for antiviral **treatment** of symptomatic residents.

Alberta Influenza Antiviral Drug Policy

The Alberta Influenza Antiviral Drug Policy as applied to vulnerable populations living in congregate living settings defines who is eligible for provincially funded antiviral medication during influenza outbreaks.

This drug policy applies to residents of CCH type B and C (formerly designated supportive living and hospices, respectively) and SLA sites 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 CCH Type A (formerly long-term care facilities, including nursing homes and sub-acute hospitals), and patients in a hospital.
- Health care workers (HCWs) in any setting.
 - 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. Employers will advise their employees regarding antiviral prophylaxis cost coverage.

Prescribing Pharmacists

Supportive living accommodation sites may look to collaborate with a prescribing pharmacist to obtain antiviral prophylaxis prescriptions.

- If you are a prescribing pharmacist, you may receive requests from sites or from individual residents to assist with influenza antiviral prophylaxis advance-prescriptions or with antiviral prophylaxis prescriptions at the time an influenza outbreak is declared.

Important Things to Note

- Any resident without an Alberta Personal Health Number is covered by this policy (**refer to the Pharmacy Benefact for additional information**). Ensure you are a party to the Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy Agreement prior to submitting the prescribed *Antivirals Dispensing* claims.
- Refer to the current Tamiflu (Roche Canada) [product monograph for Tamiflu](#) dosing recommendations. [www.rochecanada.com]
- Covenant Health Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and AHS Workplace Health and Safety (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 facilities should contact their OHS/WHS designate.

Questions

- Billing: Contact Alberta Blue Cross.
- Clinical questions about advance-antiviral prophylaxis prescriptions for influenza outbreaks can be directed to AHS CDC Outbreak Team (indicate your zone or municipality):
 - phone: 1-888-522-1919
 - email: cd_outbreak@ahs.ca.

Thank you for your continued assistance and co-operation.