

# Executive Officer Notice: Administration of the Publicly Funded Influenza Vaccines in Ontario Pharmacies

Posted September 15, 2023

For the 2023/24 influenza immunization season  
(September 1, 2023, to August 31, 2024)

This Executive Officer (EO) Notice and the accompanying Questions and Answers (Qs & As) set out the terms and conditions for a participating pharmacy's submission of claims for payment (claims) for administering publicly funded influenza vaccines to eligible Ontarians. Each document is a ministry policy that pharmacy operators must comply with under section 3.2 of the Health Network System (HNS) Subscription Agreement for Pharmacy Operators.

## Pharmacy staff administration

Part A pharmacists<sup>1</sup> and trained pharmacy staff (defined as registered pharmacy students, pharmacy interns and pharmacy technicians<sup>2</sup>) who have completed the required injection training and have registered this training with the Ontario College of Pharmacists (OCP) can administer publicly funded injectable influenza vaccine to eligible individuals aged two years and older at participating pharmacies. Trained pharmacy staff can only administer the injectable influenza vaccine under the supervision of a pharmacist.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Subsequent references in this document to a pharmacist as the person administering the influenza vaccine refer to Part A pharmacists.

<sup>2</sup> In November 2021, amendments were made to O. Reg. 202/94 (General) under the *Pharmacy Act, 1991*, to authorize pharmacy technicians, acting under the supervision of a pharmacist, to administer the influenza vaccine by injection to a patient who is two years of age or older in accordance with Ontario's [Universal Influenza Immunization Program](#) (UIIP). Pharmacy technicians should refer to this regulation for more information about this scope of practice change, including its conditions.

<sup>3</sup> References in this document to a pharmacist who supervises trained pharmacy staff (intern, registered pharmacy student, and pharmacy technician) refer to a Part A pharmacist and a pharmacist (emergency assignment).

Pharmacists and trained pharmacy staff must be familiar with and follow the conditions that apply to their scope of practice for administering the influenza vaccine, as set out in Ontario Regulation 202/94 under the *Pharmacy Act, 1991*.

## Pharmacy eligibility

Pharmacies can submit eligible claims using the ministry's HNS provided that they:

- have been approved to provide publicly funded influenza vaccines under the Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP) for the 2023/24 season, and
- have completed the *User Agreement for Pharmacies with a Licensed Injection-Trained Pharmacist Requesting Publicly Funded Influenza Vaccines for the 2023/2024 Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP)*<sup>4</sup>.

## Patient eligibility

Individuals aged two years and older who live, work, or go to school in Ontario are eligible to receive a publicly funded influenza immunization from a pharmacist or trained pharmacy staff. Publicly funded influenza vaccines must be administered free of charge to all eligible individuals.

- In the case of influenza vaccines administered to individuals with a valid Ontario health number,<sup>5</sup> pharmacists must submit claims for payment using the ministry's HNS.
- In the case of influenza vaccines administered to individuals without a valid Ontario health number, pharmacists must submit claims using a Proxy ID for payment using the ministry's HNS<sup>6</sup>.
  - Proxy patient ID is **6999 999 995**
  - Pharmacists must enter patient name, gender and age when using the Proxy ID

<sup>4</sup> The [User Agreement](#) outlines provincial requirements for pharmacies in meeting the UIIP including vaccine ordering, storage and handling; cold chain requirements and incident management; a passed vaccine refrigerator inspection; and other requirements of the program. A minimum of one trained pharmacist who is registered as such with the OCP must be listed on the respective approved pharmacy's User Agreement with the Office of Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health, Ministry of Health.

<sup>5</sup> In this Executive Officer Notice and the accompanying Qs and As, "Ontario health number" means Ontario Health Card Number or Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) eligibility number issued by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services or by a Home and Community Care Support Services organization for some ODB eligible recipients.

<sup>6</sup> For claim submission requirements for ODB program recipients without a Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) card, please refer to section 6.15 of the [Ontario Drug Programs Reference Manual](#).

## Description and payment

- There is no cost to eligible patients who receive the influenza vaccine when administered by an injection-trained pharmacist or trained pharmacy staff in an eligible pharmacy.
- Table 1 lists the publicly funded influenza vaccines that are available for pharmacies to order for the 2023/24 season, including patient age eligibility for each vaccine<sup>7</sup>.

**Table 1: Publicly Funded Influenza Vaccines**

DIN	Influenza Product For 2023/24	Dosage format	Eligibility
02420783	FluLaval Tetra GlaxoSmithKline Inc. (Quadrivalent influenza vaccine)	Intramuscular injection. 15 mcg/0.5mL; multi-dose vial	2 years of age and older
02432730	Fluzone® Quadrivalent Sanofi Pasteur Limited (Quadrivalent influenza vaccine)	Intramuscular injection. 15 mcg/0.5mL; multi-dose vial	2 years of age and older
02420643	Fluzone® Quadrivalent Sanofi Pasteur Limited (Quadrivalent influenza vaccine)	Intramuscular injection. 15 mcg/0.5mL; single dose, pre-filled syringe	2 years of age and older
02500523	Fluzone® High-Dose Quadrivalent Sanofi Pasteur Limited (High-dose quadrivalent influenza vaccine)	Intramuscular injection. 60 mcg /0.7mL; single dose, pre-filled syringe	65 years of age and older
02362384	Fluad® Seqirus (Adjuvanted trivalent influenza vaccine)	Intramuscular injection. 15 mcg/0.5mL; adjuvant; single dose, pre-filled syringe	65 years of age and older

- Patients, or their substitute decision-makers, must provide informed consent form for the administration of the vaccine, which may be obtained using a signed consent form.

<sup>7</sup> Inclusion of a product in the list of publicly funded vaccines available for pharmacies to order does not guarantee supply of the product through participating pharmaceutical distribution companies.

- Pharmacies that submit a claim for payment through the HNS using the assigned drug identification number (DIN) will be reimbursed an administrative fee of \$8.50 per eligible claim for administering the publicly funded injectable influenza vaccine.
- Pharmacies can access personal protective equipment (PPE) from the ministry's dedicated supply, on an emergency basis if needed. Refer to the Pharmacy Qs & As for more information.

## Procedures

- The pharmacist who administers the publicly funded influenza vaccine (or supervises the administration by trained pharmacy staff) must be identified in the prescriber field on the claim submitted through the HNS using the DIN specific to the publicly funded influenza vaccine administered.
- Pharmacists must ensure that the patient's date of birth (see age restrictions in Table 1 above), Ontario health number (or Proxy ID if applicable) and name (as it appears on the patient's OHIP card or other identifying document) are part of the HNS claims submission.<sup>8</sup> Failure to do so may impact the ability to submit future claims for these patients.
- The pharmacy must provide each patient with a written or electronic record of their influenza immunization injection.

## Pharmacy documentation requirements

Pharmacies must keep a record of every dose of publicly funded influenza vaccine administered.

Pharmacists, pharmacy staff and pharmacies shall keep records consistent with their obligations under the *Pharmacy Act, 1991*, the *Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act*, and any instructions or guidelines provided by the OCP or the ministry.

For purposes of post-payment verification, pharmacy records related to claims for administering a publicly funded influenza vaccine must be maintained in a readily available format for the purpose of ministry inspection for a minimum of 10 years from the last recorded pharmacy service provided to the patient, or until 10 years after the day on which the patient reached or would have reached the age of 18 years, whichever is longer.

Overpayments due to inappropriate claim submissions are subject to recovery.

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<sup>8</sup> For claim submission requirements for ODB program recipients without an OHIP card, please refer to section 6.15 of the [Ontario Drug Programs Reference Manual](#).

Documentation requirements are:

- A record of:
  - Name, date of birth and address of patient
  - Name of vaccine administered, strength/dose (if applicable), lot number, expiry date, time, date and location of immunization, route and site of administration
  - Name, pharmacy address and signature of the trained pharmacist (or trained pharmacy staff) who administered the vaccine
- A record of the informed consent of the patient or their substitute decision-maker, which may consist of a signed consent form
- A record of influenza immunization provided to the patient
- A record of any adverse events following immunization (AEFIs) that may or may not result in the administration of epinephrine, and the circumstances relating to the administration of the substance
- Pharmacists are required by law to report AEFIs. Reports should be made using the [Ontario Adverse Events Following Immunization Reporting Form](#) and sent to the local [public health unit \(PHU\)](#)<sup>9</sup>. A copy of the Reporting Form sent to the PHU must be retained by the pharmacy.

Pharmacy documentation must also meet OCP's policies and guidelines, including their [Record Retention, Disclosure and Disposal Guidelines](#) and [Documentation Guidelines](#).

## Pharmacy billing procedure for publicly funded vaccine

Claims submission requirements for ODB-eligible recipients and Non-ODB recipients can be accessed in the [Ontario Drug Programs Reference Manual](#) Section 6.15.

## Restrictions to the UIIP

Restrictions include:

- Injection-trained pharmacists (or trained pharmacy staff under the supervision of a pharmacist) retained by eligible pharmacies are permitted to administer a publicly

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<sup>9</sup> For complete reporting requirements, please refer to the pharmacy [User Agreement](#) for adverse events. For additional information, please contact your local public health unit. Refer to the ministry website for a list of [Ontario public health units](#).

funded influenza vaccine outside the boundaries of the pharmacy, if the vaccine is administered within the geographic boundaries of the PHU where their pharmacy is located. Pharmacists (or trained pharmacy staff under the supervision of a pharmacist) may administer the flu vaccine to residents of retirement homes within their PHU; however, pharmacists (or trained pharmacy staff under the supervision of a pharmacist) must not administer the vaccine to hospital in-patients or residents living in licensed long-term care homes.

- In accordance with the [Vaccine Storage and Handling Guidelines](#), pharmacies should ensure that vaccine is being stored, transported and monitored appropriately when removing and administering doses outside the pharmacy. Please contact your local [PHU](#) for assistance.
- If a patient does not have a valid Ontario health number, a pharmacist (or trained pharmacy staff under the supervision of a pharmacist) can still administer the influenza vaccine provided the patient possesses valid documentation that they live, work or study in Ontario.
- Administration of non-publicly funded influenza vaccine products that are privately purchased by the pharmacy do not qualify for payment.
- Pharmacists cannot transfer publicly funded influenza vaccine inventory to another pharmacy.
- Pharmacists (or trained pharmacy staff under the supervision of a pharmacist) must not administer an influenza vaccine that was not ordered and received by their pharmacy.
- The ministry does not accept paper claims for payment for pharmacist (or trained pharmacy staff under the supervision of a pharmacist) administered influenza vaccines unless there is a need to use 3 intervention codes.
- A pharmacist's recommendation to a prescriber that a patient should receive an influenza vaccine, whether the vaccine is eligible for public funding or not, is not a service eligible for payment under the Pharmaceutical Opinion Program.

# **Reimbursement of epinephrine auto-injector for emergency treatment after administration of the influenza vaccine**

In a situation of an adverse event resulting immediately after a pharmacist's (or trained pharmacy staff under the supervision of a pharmacist) administration of the publicly funded influenza vaccine to a person aged two years or older, the ministry will reimburse pharmacies for the acquisition cost of the epinephrine auto-injector up to the total amount reimbursed as set out in section 6.15 of the [Ontario Drug Programs Reference Manual](#). Emergency treatment must take place in the pharmacy or at the vaccine immunization location (see above restrictions on locations for vaccine administration).

## **Pharmacy epinephrine auto-injector billing procedures**

For detailed information on reimbursement of the epinephrine auto-injector up to the total amount reimbursed and, claims submission (for patients with or without an Ontario health number or OHIP card), documentation requirements and restrictions please refer to the [Ontario Drug Programs Reference Manual](#) Section 6.15.

- The value indicated in the 'total amount reimbursed' column (Section 6.15) for the epinephrine auto-injector will be reimbursed by the Ontario government, if applicable.
- Pharmacy staff must use the product identification number (PIN) of the epinephrine product and submit a second claim through the HNS following the influenza vaccine claim on the same day of service. Do not enter the DIN, a mark-up or a dispensing fee.
- The ministry does not accept paper claims for payment for epinephrine auto-injector unless there is a need to use 3 intervention codes.

### **Additional Information:**

#### **For pharmacies:**

Please call ODB Pharmacy Help Desk at: 1-800-668-6641

**For all other Health Care Providers and the Public:** Please call ServiceOntario, Infoline at 1-866-532-3161 TTY 1-800-387-5559. In Toronto, TTY 416-327-4282.