

COVID-19 Fall 2023 Immunization Program Policy

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose of the COVID-19 Fall 2023 Immunization Program Policy is to provide updated provincial direction to immunizers who administer PEI's publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine.
- 1.2. Collaboration, coordination and communication across all phases of the immunization process strengthens timely delivery of COVID-19 immunization and reduces vaccine wastage.

2.0 POLICY

- 2.1. The Chief Public Health Office (CPHO) will provide COVID-19 vaccine free of charge to immunizers for administration of the fall program.
- 2.2. Individuals living in Prince Edward Island who present for publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine will receive the vaccine free of charge.
 - 2.2.1. Individuals living in PEI **without a PEI Health Card** (e.g. students, RCMP, Department of National Defense [DND], seasonal residents) who present for publicly funded influenza vaccine will not be charged for the vaccine or an administration fee.
- 2.3. Individuals who have not received their primary series should continue to be offered COVID-19 vaccination opportunities at the appropriate spacing defined in the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization](#) (NACI).
- 2.4. Beginning in the fall of 2023 for those previously vaccinated against COVID-19, NACI recommends [a dose of the new mRNA formulation of COVID-19 vaccine \(based on the XBB strain\) for individuals in the authorized age group](#) if it has been at least 6 months from the previous COVID-19 vaccine dose or known SARS-CoV-2 infection (whichever is later).
- 2.5. The populations listed below are especially recommended to receive a COVID-19 dose in the fall of 2023:
 - 2.5.1. Adults 65 years of age or older
 - 2.5.2. Residents of long-term care homes and other congregate living settings
 - 2.5.3. Individuals with underlying medical conditions that place them at higher risk of severe COVID-19
 - 2.5.4. Individuals who are pregnant

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- 2.5.5. Individuals in or from First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities
- 2.5.6. Members of racialized and other equity-deserving communities
- 2.5.7. People who provide essential community services

- 2.6. To help improve uptake of vaccines, clients and patients should be offered co-administration options (where feasible) in the same visit for COVID-19 and other vaccines for which they may be eligible (e.g. influenza vaccine).

- 2.7. The Chief Public Health Officer (CPHO) or designate can allow exemption for vaccine administration outside of this policy on a case by case review.

3.0 VACCINE PROVISION

- 3.1 The vaccine will be provided to immunizers who agree to adhere to the COVID-19 Fall 2023 Immunization Program.
 - 3.1.1. The vaccine must be maintained according to vaccine [Storage and Handling Guidelines](#) specific to the vaccine to ensure adequate cold-chain management.
 - 3.1.2. All immunizers must be familiar with the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) statement as well as relevant vaccine product monographs.

4.0 REPORTING

- 4.1. Immunizers must keep records of all COVID-19 vaccine inventory and immunizations administered according to the [Public Health Act Immunization Regulations](#).
- 4.2. Immunizers must record and keep COVID-19 vaccine inventory records and report status updates to the CPHO at the request of CPHO.
- 4.3. Immunizers must report data within 48 hours of vaccine administration to the Chief Public Health Office for all COVID-19 immunization administered and in accordance with the [Public Health Act Immunization Regulations](#) (Section 1.1).
- 4.4. All immunizers must monitor the health and safety of the individuals to whom COVID-19 vaccine is administered; Immunizers shall have in place protocols for management of anaphylaxis and COVID-19 vaccine must only be administered in settings where these protocols are in place.

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- 4.5. All unexpected adverse events following administration of COVID-19 vaccine must be reported to the CPHO **within 24 hours as soon as observed or reported** using the [Adverse Event Following Immunization \(AEFI\) form](#). This requirement is outlined in the [Notifiable Diseases and Conditions and Communicable Diseases Regulations](#) under the [Public Health Act](#).
- 4.6. All **expired** COVID-19 vaccine must be returned to the Provincial Pharmacy and does not require to be returned under cold chain.

5.0 APPLICATION

- 5.1. This policy applies to all immunizers who obtain publicly funded vaccine from the CPHO.
- 5.2. Compliance to this policy will be monitored by the Chief Public Health Office. Those found to be non-compliant will have restrictions placed on their ability to receive publicly funded vaccines which may include not receiving further publicly funded vaccine until there is evidence that corrective measures are implemented.

6.0 DEFINITIONS

- 6.1. **Cold Chain Management** - the process used to maintain optimal conditions during the transport, storage, and handling of vaccines, from the point of manufacture until such time as the vaccine is administered to a client.
- 6.2. **Immunizer** - a health professional eligible to administer COVID-19 vaccine under this policy.
- 6.3. **Publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine** - vaccine that is purchased/provided by the Chief Public Health Office and distributed to immunizers without charge pursuant to this policy.

7.0 BACKGROUND

- 7.1. Providing vaccine to individuals for exceptional circumstances will assist in protecting high risk individuals.

8.0 KEY SEARCH WORDS

- 8.1. COVID-19 Fall 2023 Immunization Program Policy; Immunization Regulations; Notifiable Diseases and Conditions and Communicable Disease Regulations.

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9.0 CROSS REFERENCE

- 9.1. PEI Public Health Act; Notifiable Diseases and Conditions and Communicable Disease Regulations; Immunization Regulations.