



**PLEASE COPY FOR ALL
PHYSICIANS
IN YOUR OFFICE**

*From the Office of the
Medical Health Officer
September 17, 2020*

Influenza Vaccine Program 2020-2021

Dear Community Vaccine Providers:

Thank you to those who participated in our survey on influenza vaccine distribution! Over 130 community vaccine provider practices responded and we heard that 90% of you plan to deliver the same or more influenza vaccine this season given COVID-19. Your input helps us to improve influenza vaccine distribution and delivery in our communities. Based on your feedback, we aim to provide you with clear information on how we are adapting in the context of COVID-19, how our vaccine distribution works, and what you can expect for the 2020/21 influenza season.

- **COVID-19 means that we will need to respond differently to the flu.** Flu immunization is especially important this season to avoid a simultaneous increase of both flu and COVID-19. At the same time, COVID-19 adds complexity to delivering flu immunizations with PPE, physical distancing, and additional time needed for each vaccination. Fraser Health Public Health is committed to providing you with regular updates to assist with planning for this season.
- **We anticipate increased demand for influenza vaccinations from the public.** To prepare for this, the province has purchased 30% more vaccines compared to last year. Fraser Health will receive 650,000 dosages in total, which is nearly 185,000 more vaccines than we delivered in 2019/2020. These dosages will be shared among community vaccine providers, public health clinics, long-term care and other acute high-priority sites.
- **Pharmacists and physicians are crucial to flu immunization.** In 2019/20, pharmacists provided 57% of Fraser Health's flu vaccinations and physicians provided another 30%. We need pharmacists, physicians, and other community vaccine providers to continue or increase flu vaccination in order to meet demand and protect the health of our community. Fraser Health Public Health will continue to immunize vulnerable populations through targeted outreach clinics and children under 5 and their families, and we are also planning for an increase.
- **We need to find new ways to immunize that allow for physical distancing and minimize risk of COVID transmission** (e.g. through community-based clinics or administering vaccines outdoors). Public Health will support community vaccine providers in these efforts by providing vaccine, advising on guidance and planning. For more information, see the National Advisory Committee on Immunization's [Guidance for influenza vaccine delivery in the presence of COVID-19](#).

The Fraser Health Medical Health Officers are available for medical consultations at 604-587-3828 or 1-877-342-6467 (M-F, 0830-1630 hrs) or after hours at 604-527-4806.

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- Last week, the Doctors of BC issued a communication to Divisions of Family Practice Leads and Executive Directors encouraging health authorities, divisions, and other partners to work with Public Health to ensure that community vaccination needs are met. We encourage Divisions of Family Practice, GPs, and pharmacists to begin considering how larger community-based “mass” clinics can be offered in their community.
- This season’s flu campaign will begin in mid-October with the exact date to be confirmed in the coming days.

We are committed to providing you with the information you need. We will be in touch again next week about vaccine products, distribution, and how to order vaccines. Thank you again for your commitment to delivering influenza vaccinations to our community especially during these extraordinary times.