

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 living in long term care (LTC) and supportive living (SL) settings, including lodges, manors, seniors' residences, and designated supportive living facilities.
- Unimmunized staff working in LTC and SL settings.

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 team, or by the facility.

When an influenza outbreak is declared at a LTC or SL 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 (CLS) defines who is eligible for provincially funded antiviral medication during influenza outbreaks.

This policy applies to residents of supportive living 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 LTC facilities (including nursing homes and auxiliary hospitals) and patients in a hospital.
 - residents of LTC are covered under the Nursing Homes Act
 - patients admitted to hospital are covered under the Hospitals Act

- 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. Their employer will advise their employees in regards to coverage of the cost of antiviral prophylaxis.

Prescribing Pharmacists

Supportive Living 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 supportive living 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 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 Supportive Living 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 about advance antiviral prophylaxis prescriptions for influenza outbreaks, please contact the CDC Outbreak Team and indicate the municipality or AHS zone you are calling from:

- phone: 1-888-522-1919
- email: cd_outbreak@ahs.ca.

Thank you for your continued assistance and co-operation.