

**Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care**

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**Ministère de la Santé
et des Soins de longue durée**

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Dear Health Care Providers,

With the launch of the Ontario Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP) on October 22, I wanted to provide you with some updates regarding the program for the 2018/2019 influenza season, specifically in relation to vaccines for seniors.

The ministry receives vaccine doses from manufacturers over several months, starting in late September. To date, the ministry has received over 95 per cent of the total provincial vaccine supply and distributed over 3.3 million doses of the 4.4 million influenza vaccine doses ordered for the 2018-19 influenza season.

Product Changes for the 2018/2019 UIIP Season

As you are aware, two product changes have been implemented for the 2018/2019 influenza season:

- Quadrivalent inactivated vaccine (QIV) available for anyone ≥ 6 months of age
- High-dose trivalent inactivated vaccine (high-dose TIV or Fluzone[®] High-Dose) available for seniors ≥ 65 years of age

Seniors ≥ 65 Years of Age: High-Dose TIV and QIV

Based on the available evidence, high-dose TIV is expected to provide superior protection compared to standard-dose TIV. While high-dose contains only one B strain compared to the QIV, which contains B strains from both lineages, the high-dose TIV contains a higher amount of antigen per influenza strain.

According to the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), there is currently no data on how high-dose TIV directly compares to QIV products at a programmatic level. Either vaccine, QIV or high-dose TIV, will provide protection against the flu.

If you would like more information on the two products to inform discussions with seniors, please see the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Health Care Provider Q&A's and Public Health Ontario's Guidance for Health Care Professionals:

- <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/flu/uiip/default.aspx>
- <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/BrowseByTopic/InfectiousDiseases/Pages/IDLandingPages/Influenza.aspx>

Flu activity has started to be seen in the province. As both vaccines are recommended products for seniors 65 years of age and older, do not delay vaccination for a particular product. Both products protect against the flu and the most important thing is for seniors to be vaccinated.

Influenza vaccine orders from the available provincial supply continue to be filled at the Ontario Government Pharmaceutical and Medical Supply Service (OGPMSS). The ministry will continue to monitor and work with health units regarding the provincial supply.

As in previous years, the ministry will be reviewing the 2018/2019 UIIP, including use of the high-dose TIV, in order to inform any program changes for future influenza seasons.

Should you have any questions regarding local distribution and ordering, please contact Public Health Sudbury & Districts at 705.522.9200, ext. 490.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

David C. Williams, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Chief Medical Officer of Health

c. Nina Arron, Director, Health Protection & Surveillance Policy and Programs Branch