

Administration of provincially funded vaccines in pharmacy and RSV vaccine update

RSV immunization program update

Provincially Funded RSV Distribution Extended

Starting **March 10, 2025**, the provincially funded RSV vaccine distribution will expand to include **all** pharmacies participating in provincially funded vaccine programs. All pharmacies will be able to order a maximum of 10 doses of Abrysvo RSV vaccine per week through their wholesale distributor. Please note that only Abrysvo qualifies under the public program. The updated 10-dose maximum order allocation applies to all pharmacies, including the 573 pharmacies that had previously been selected to participate in the Fall RSV program. To ensure supply is available for all, pharmacies are asked to deplete their RSV inventory before ordering more doses.

RSV eligibility expansion

Starting **March 10, 2025**, Alberta Health will provincially fund RSV vaccine for community dwelling seniors **70 years and older** (down from 75 years) and First Nations, Metis, and Inuit individuals 60 years and older.

Residents of continuing care homes and senior supportive living accommodations aged 60 years and older continue to be eligible to receive the provincially funded RSV vaccine. For more information, please refer to the RSV biological page on the Alberta Immunization Policy webpage (link: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/58d31634-61d9-469d-b95f-f714719b923e/resource/9c96fe6d-fe5e-491a-877d-94c0344ec0ed/download/aip-bp-rsv.pdf>) or Alberta Blue Cross Benefact #1207 (<https://www.ab.bluecross.ca/pdfs/pharmacy-benefacts/pharmacy-benefit-1207.pdf>).

Note: All RSV vaccines, including those not provincially funded (i.e. Arexvy), are considered Schedule II in Alberta (<https://abpharmacy.ca/news/all-respiratory-syncytial-virus-rsv-vaccines-are-schedule-ii/>).

Reminder: it is mandatory that pharmacy providers administering provincially funded RSV vaccine maintain up-to-date RSV inventory information on the Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy Inventory Map. This helps Albertans locate their nearest available provider with stock of RSV vaccine.

To update vaccine inventory, visit: <https://www.ab.bluecross.ca/provider/type/pharmacy/secure-online-site.php>.

Age limits on publicly funded vaccines

Alberta Health recognizes that the Alberta College of Pharmacy's new Standards of Practice for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians has taken effect on February 1, 2025. The new Standards state under *Domain 7.7.3* that "a regulated member must not administer an injection for a drug or vaccine to a child younger than two years of age." This is a change from the previous Standards, which stated under 17.5 that "pharmacist(s) authorized to administer drugs by injection must not administer an injection to a child younger than five years old."

In the context of provincially funded vaccines offered in pharmacies, the lowest age that a regulated member can administer an injection for a vaccine will remain at five years old until otherwise stated. This means that until further notice, provincially funded influenza and COVID-19 vaccine cannot be administered to a child younger than five years of age.

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PHARMACY BENEFACT

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A BULLETIN FOR PHARMACY SERVICE PROVIDERS FROM ALBERTA BLUE CROSS®

The minimum age for administering Tdap and pneumococcal 20 vaccines remain at 18 years. For the provincially funded RSV vaccine, the minimum age is 60 for eligible Albertans in the Alberta Outreach Program and 70 for those living in their own homes.

Please be advised that billing Alberta Blue Cross for administering any of the provincially funded vaccines listed above to children under the age of five is not permitted and will not be eligible for compensation.

This does not apply to vaccines purchased at a pharmacy either out-of-pocket or through private insurance. For instance, travel vaccines paid for out-of-pocket or through private insurance can be administered according to the product monograph for those products without additional age restrictions.

REPORTING IMMUNIZATION EVENTS for the administration of non-provincially funded vaccines:

To continue adherence to the reporting requirements listed in the Alberta Immunization Regulation, and if your pharmacy does not already report immunization events through real-time integration, please use the Immunization Direct Submission Mechanism to report that an immunization event has been provided.

For more information, visit: <https://www.albertanetcare.ca/learningcentre/ImmDirectSubmission.htm>.

For assistance with benefit or claim inquiries, please contact an Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy Services Provider Relations contact centre representative at

780-498-8370 (Edmonton and area)

403-294-4041 (Calgary and area)

1-800-361-9632 (toll free)

FAX 780-498-8406 (Edmonton and area)

FAX 1-877-305-9911 (toll free)

Alberta Blue Cross offers online access to current Pharmacy Benefacts and supplemental claiming information to assist with the submission of your direct-bill drug claims.

Visit ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-home.php

