
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health Services

B.C. PHARMACISTS TO GIVE INJECTIONS FOR VACCINES

VICTORIA – Specially-trained pharmacists in British Columbia can now provide patients with vaccine injections.

“As we are facing both regular flu season and the H1N1 flu pandemic, pharmacists can now help administer the annual flu vaccine, including vaccinations for H1N1,” said Health Services Minister Kevin Falcon. “Expanding the role of pharmacists gives patients more choice for, and increased access to health care.”

About 150 pharmacists from across the province have already completed the training to meet the certification program. More pharmacists are expected to complete the training in additional sessions scheduled over the next couple of months.”

“Expanding the role of pharmacists to give preventative injections will increase access to safe health-care services,” said Suzanne Solven, deputy registrar of the College of Pharmacists British Columbia. “Our focus is on ensuring that pharmacists can continue to provide the safe, high level of care British Columbians have come to depend on.”

Changes are effective following a 30-day public consultation that resulted in amendments to regulations that govern the scope of practice for pharmacists, in addition to changes and processes required by the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia.

The BC Pharmacy Association is the first to offer an accredited training program for pharmacists to learn injection skills.

“We are pleased to assist in the training of pharmacists to safely administer injections,” said Marnie Mitchell, CEO of the BC Pharmacy Association. “Given pharmacists’ medication expertise, and with the advanced training, they are a logical choice for British Columbians seeking safe and convenient access to flu vaccine and other injections.”

To be able to give vaccines, pharmacists are required to successfully complete the training program before receiving authorization from the college to administer injections for vaccination purposes. The college has also established standards of practice for injection based on the recommendation of an inter-professional committee.

The H1N1 flu vaccine will be made available to British Columbians beginning the week of Oct. 26. It will be available first to those people who would most benefit from immunization (individuals under 65 years of age with chronic disease, pregnant women and individuals – including First Nations people – living in remote or isolated communities).

Following that, it will be available to other groups who would benefit most (children under five years old, health-care workers and household contacts and care providers of infants and immunocompromised people) and then to members of the general public in a phased approach. When people are eligible for their H1N1 vaccine and if they fall under the usual guidelines for seasonal flu, it will now also be possible for them to receive both shots at the same time.

For information about upcoming flu clinics at your local pharmacy, talk to your pharmacist.

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