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**To:** Nova Scotia Immunization Providers  
**From:** Dr. Robert Strang, Chief Medical Officer of Health  
**Date:** September 5, 2017  
**Re:** ***INFLUENZA VACCINATION PROGRAM FOR 2017-2018***

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The annual influenza immunization season is fast approaching. Your participation and support in the promotion of the annual influenza program is greatly appreciated. Please see the accompanying document: Q & A: Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Information for 2017-18. A few items of note:

### **Eligibility/Susceptibility**

Nova Scotia continues to publicly fund injectable Quadrivalent Inactivated Vaccine (QIV) which contains two Influenza A strains and two Influenza B strains. **For the 2017-18 season, influenza vaccine is recommended and publicly funded for all Nova Scotians ages 6 months or older.**

While all Nova Scotians are encouraged to be immunized, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) emphasizes that high risk individuals or those people capable of transmitting influenza to those at high risk remain the top priority for influenza immunization. Influenza vaccination is available to all residents of Nova Scotia ages 6 months or older, but we know that it is particularly important for the elderly, pregnant women, children, and people living with chronic diseases, and those around them to be adequately protected.

### **Health Care Providers**

In both our clinical practice, and as leaders in health care facilities and Health Authorities, there are many opportunities for health care providers to promote and support annual influenza immunization, such as:

- ensuring that individuals (especially those at high risk) are advised about and offered influenza vaccine at every clinical encounter during the fall and winter
- encouraging and supporting initiatives to provide influenza vaccine within health care facilities, such as at outpatient specialty clinics (e.g. diabetic daycare), as part of discharge planning for admitted patients and in emergency departments

- being a positive role model for other health care workers (HCW) by being immunized yourselves, encouraging co-workers to be immunized, providing factual information on influenza vaccine and ensuring HCW and patients are offered vaccine
- promoting and supporting the allocation of resources to implement comprehensive influenza immunization programs for both the public and HCW
- working with other partners to increase opportunities for the public to access influenza immunization

### **Vaccine Supply/Ordering**

Public Health receives several shipments of vaccine over a period of time and must ensure it is distributed equitably across the province to a range of immunization providers. As a result, it is not possible to fill vaccine order requests from immunization providers for their whole seasons' supply. Please place your first vaccine order based on the amount of vaccine you expect to use within the next two to four weeks and then gauge subsequent orders on your sense of ongoing demand. Public Health will attempt to fill each provider's vaccine order but there may be a need to limit the amount of vaccine given to a single provider to ensure reasonable access for all Nova Scotians and for all providers. We ask you to plan your immunization clinics accordingly and we encourage you to first immunize people at greatest risk of influenza-related complications.

**Vaccine orders can be placed anytime. It is important to work with your local Public Health office to coordinate vaccine ordering and delivery. Vaccine will be distributed from Public Health offices beginning on October 10<sup>th</sup>. You can begin administering vaccine when you receive it.**

Thank you for your continued support in promoting influenza vaccination.