

December 15, 2020

Dear Health Care Provider:

On December 9, 2020, Health Canada approved the first COVID-19 vaccine for use in Canada, the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 mRNA vaccine (Tozinameran or BNT162b2). Manitoba expects to receive its first shipment this week and will immediately start immunizing eligible Manitobans.

Eligibility criteria for the COVID-19 vaccine is guided by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization's (NACI's) guidance on the prioritization of initial doses of COVID-19 vaccine(s). The ultra-low temperature storage and handling requirements of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 mRNA vaccine also impacted decisions related to provincial eligibility criteria.

At this time, the COVID-19 vaccine is only being offered at designated COVID-19 Immunization Clinics. Note that limited initial vaccine supply necessitates the immunization of certain groups earlier than others. Therefore, the Province will be regularly updating its eligibility list as supply increases. Note that individuals who do not receive the COVID-19 vaccine when they are first eligible can do so at a later time (unless otherwise stated).

Effective immediately, the following groups are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine series (2 doses):

- Health care workers (including those who work in health care settings and personal support workers whose work involves direct contact with patients) who work in:
 - Critical Care Units and are born on or before December 31st, 1970.
 - Acute Care Facilities and are born on or before December 31st, 1960.
 - Long Term Care Facilities and are born on or before December 31st, 1960.
 - Designated COVID-19 immunization clinics (regardless of their DOB).

According to the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), **the COVID-19 vaccine should not be offered to the following populations** excluded from clinical trials until further evidence is available:

- Immunosuppressed, due to disease, treatment or an autoimmune disorder
- Pregnant or breastfeeding

However, if a risk assessment deems that the benefits of vaccine outweigh the potential risks for individuals in the groups noted above (e.g. where the risk of severe outcomes of COVID-19 and risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2 is high) or for the fetus/infant (in the case of pregnancy/breastfeeding), and if informed consent includes discussion about the insufficient evidence in this population, then a complete series of authorized COVID-19 vaccine *may be* offered to these individuals. However at this time, individual risk assessments are not being

done at the designated COVID-19 immunization clinics. The COVID-19 Vaccine Implementation Task Force is leading the development of a clinical pathway to sufficiently conduct an individualized risk assessment for informed consent for persons who are immunosuppressed, pregnant or breastfeeding. Information will be shared on the provincial COVID-19 vaccine website as it is available.

For more information on who should NOT get the COVID-19 vaccine, refer to the product monograph, NACI statement(s) or the provincial vaccine factsheet (links provided below).

Due to limitations in the number of participants and duration of follow-up from COVID-19 clinical trials, medium- and long-term evidence on vaccine safety is limited. However, studies are ongoing. **Report any Adverse Event Following Immunization (AEFI)** that satisfies reporting criteria per the User Guide for the Completion and Submission of an AEFI Reporting Form (https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/docs/aefi_manual.pdf) (see page 2) and using the AEFI Report found at: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/div/aefi.html>. Providers with access may report directly in the Public Health Information Management System (PHIMS).

Links and Resources:

- The National Advisory Committee on Immunization's (NACI's) COVID-19 statements are available online at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci.html>.
- The product monograph for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 mRNA vaccine (Tozinameran or BNT162b2) is available at: <https://covid-vaccine.canada.ca/info/pdf/pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine-pm1-en.pdf>.
- Provincial vaccine factsheets and other provincial resources and information about Manitoba's COVID-19 Immunization Campaign, can be found at: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/vaccine/index.html>.

Sincerely,

"Original Signed by"

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