

COVID-19 Immunization Program

Employer Immunization Clinic Information

Purpose

To provide an overview of the infrastructure, logistics and resources required for administering COVID-19 vaccines.

How You Can Help

The best way employers can help with Alberta's COVID-19 Immunization Program is to be champions for their staff. Employers can support their employees by getting immunized themselves, encouraging immunization, providing staff with paid time off to be immunized, and assisting those who may require help navigating booking appointments.

Employers may have success with small incentives to encourage employees to get immunized (see Employers as Champions resource).

Challenges with Onsite Workplace Clinics

It takes time

In the context of COVID-19 community transmission and variants spreading rapidly, Alberta's number one priority is to get people immunized as fast as possible. Clinics take time and resources to setup.

Efficiency

Due to the staffing requirements for large immunization clinics, there are currently limited health practitioners with the necessary immunization qualifications and competencies to administer COVID-19 vaccines at onsite workplace clinics.

Legislation Barriers

Alberta has some of the most robust regulatory requirements related to immunization in Canada which standardizes practices for all immunization providers and contributes to safe and effective immunization programs for all Albertans.

As outlined in Alberta's *Public Health Act*, the Immunization Regulation reporting requirements are very strict and specific. All doses administered must be reported within seven days to the provincial immunization data repository and reporting protocols for adverse events following immunization and cold-chain breaks must be followed according to regulatory requirements.

Direct electronic reporting of immunizations takes time, IT resources and privacy agreements with the Government of Alberta.



Vaccine Challenges

The mRNA vaccines have challenging storage and handling guidelines that differ from other vaccines that immunizers may be familiar with.

The mRNA COVID-19 vaccines must remain frozen until they are ready to use and therefore should not be transported in a liquid form, making onsite immunization clinics difficult.

This means Alberta Health is not currently able to supply COVID-19 vaccines to private Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) companies at this time due to complex cold storage requirements. Further, there is no compensation mechanism set up with the Government of Alberta for private OHS companies, which means the immunization service delivery is charged to the employer.

Onsite Clinics

Currently, Alberta Health Services is only operating a limited number of onsite workplace clinics where there are large active outbreaks, regional hot spots or barriers to immunization access. It is more efficient and effective to support employees to access immunization through currently available options - pharmacies and AHS clinics.