

# Executive Officer Notice: Administration of Publicly Funded COVID-19 vaccines in Ontario Pharmacies

**Effective March 10, 2021**

Part A pharmacists, registered pharmacy students, interns and pharmacy technicians who are members of the Ontario College of Pharmacists (OCP) and who have completed the required injection training and in accordance with [OCP guidance](#) can administer publicly funded injectable COVID-19 vaccines to eligible Ontarians at participating pharmacies (see Pharmacy Eligibility below).

The purpose of this Executive Officer Notice and the accompanying Questions and Answers (Qs & As) document, is to set out the terms and conditions for a participating pharmacy's submission of claims for payment (claims) for administering injectable COVID-19 vaccines to eligible Ontarians. Each document is a ministry policy that pharmacy operators must comply with under section 3.2 of the Health Network System (HNS) Subscription Agreement for Pharmacy Operators.

This notice and the accompanying Qs & As document is **not** intended to describe a pharmacy operator's obligations in respect of administering injectable COVID-19 vaccines under applicable legislation, other agreements with the Province of Ontario, or policies of the OCP. Pharmacy operators with questions about their legal obligations outside of the HNS Subscription Agreement should refer to the applicable legislation, other agreement, or OCP policy as the case may be.

## Pharmacy eligibility

In order to be eligible to submit claims for administering a publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine, a pharmacy operator (also referred to in this document as a "participating pharmacy") must meet the following requirements:

- Have a valid HNS Subscription Agreement with the Ministry; and
- Have a valid agreement with the Ministry respecting COVID-19 vaccine administration and the use of the Provincial COVID-19 vaccine solution (the "COVID-19 Vaccine Agreement").

## Patient eligibility

- The eligible populations for pharmacy COVID-19 vaccine administration will begin with the adult population between the ages of 60-64. A patient is eligible if they are age 60-64 years as of the day of vaccination OR, will be, or have been, age 60-64 years in 2021.
- Subsequent age brackets will become eligible as vaccine supply allows, and there has been sufficient completion of the 60-64-year-old age demographic across the province. The eligibility criteria will be updated from time to time and the Executive Officer Notice will be updated accordingly.

## General Description

- There is no cost to eligible patients who receive the COVID-19 vaccine when administered at a pharmacy.
- For each valid claim submitted, a pharmacy will receive \$13.00 for the following services:
  - Administering the COVID-19 vaccine.
  - Complying with any requirements to access and use the Provincial COVID-19 Vaccine Solution-COVAX<sub>ON</sub> under the COVID-19 Vaccine Agreement, provided that the pharmacy has been granted access to the Solution.
- Pharmacies are eligible to access personal protective equipment (PPE) from the ministry's dedicated supply, if needed. The ministry's supply of PPE must **ONLY** be used to support the activity of pharmacies administering the publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine.
- Table 1 lists the publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine that is available to pharmacies, including any restrictions on administering the vaccine (e.g. age groups)<sup>1</sup>.
- For clarity, where a patient meets the eligibility criteria for the vaccine (see "Patient Eligibility" above) but is excluded by the restrictions for the vaccine product (see Table 1 below), the vaccine cannot be administered to the patient. If a patient does not meet the eligibility criteria for the vaccine (see "Patient Eligibility" above), the vaccine cannot be administered to the patient even if they are not excluded by the restrictions.

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<sup>1</sup> Inclusion of a product in the list of publicly funded vaccines available for pharmacies does not guarantee supply of the product through the participating pharmaceutical distributors.

**Table 1: Publicly Funded COVID-19 Vaccine**

DIN	COVID-19 Vaccine Product	Dosage format	Dosing regimen	Restrictions
02512947	COVISHIELD COVID-19 VACCINE Verity Pharmaceuticals Inc.	Intramuscular injection solution. Multi-dose vial of <b>10 doses</b> (5 x 10 <sup>10</sup> VP / 0.5mL solution)	2 doses (up to 16 weeks apart)*	Only administered to persons 18 – 64 years of age <sup>2</sup>

\*Based on emerging evidence of the protection provided by the first dose of a two dose series for COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized in Canada, the National Advisory Committee for Immunization ([NACI](#)) recommends that in the context of limited COVID-19 vaccine supply jurisdictions should maximize the number of individuals benefiting from the first dose of vaccine by extending the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine up to four months after the first.

## Billing Procedures – Summary

- Claims for administering the publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine can only be submitted electronically using the HNS (see “Billing Procedures - Detailed” below). No manual paper claims will be accepted.
- The Part A pharmacist who administers the vaccine or who is overseeing a student, intern or pharmacy technician who administers the vaccine must be identified in the prescriber field on the claim.
- Each claim must include the DIN corresponding to the publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine that was administered to the patient (see Table 1 above).
- The person submitting the claim must ensure that the patient’s date of birth, Ontario health number and name (as it appears on the health card / document) are included in the claim. Failure to do so – especially for non-Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) Program recipients – may impact the ability to submit future claims for these patients.
  - **For patients without an Ontario health card number, pharmacies must use the proxy patient health card ID: 79999 999 93 (see below for further details).**

<sup>2</sup> Note: a patient turning 65 years of age in 2021 is still eligible.

## Pharmacy Documentation Requirements

Pharmacies must keep a record of every dose of publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine administered.

Pharmacists shall keep records consistent with their obligations under the *Pharmacy Act, 1991*, the *Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act*, the COVID-19 Vaccine Agreement, and any instructions or guidelines provided by the OCP or the ministry.

For purposes of post-payment verification, pharmacy records related to claims for administering a publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine must be maintained in a readily available format for the purpose of ministry inspection for a minimum of 10 years from the last recorded pharmacy service provided to the patient, or until 10 years after the day on which the patient reached or would have reached the age of 18 years, whichever is longer.

Overpayments due to inappropriate claim submissions are subject to recovery.

Pharmacy documentation must be maintained in a readily retrievable format and record requirements are:

- Record of name and address of patient.
- Record of alternate ID if applicable.
- Record of name of vaccine administered, dose, lot number, expiry date, time, date and location of immunization, route and site of administration.
- Record of name, pharmacy address and signature of individual who administered the vaccine.
- Provide a written or electronic record of the COVID-19 immunization record to the patient, which includes the pharmacy's contact information and arrangements for the second scheduled dose (if applicable) at the same pharmacy location.
- Records documenting compliance with any requirements to access and use the Provincial COVID-19 Vaccine Solution-COVAX<sub>ON</sub> under the COVID-19 Vaccine Agreement.

## Billing Procedures – Detailed

Claims submission requirements for administering publicly funded COVID-19 vaccines are as follows:

**For ODB-eligible recipients**

The claim submission follows the usual process (See [Section 5](#) of the Ontario Drug Program Reference Manual) for submitting claims on the HNS with the following additional information:

- Intervention code 'PS': (Professional Care Services)
- Drug Identification Number (DIN): as per the publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine administered (see Table 1 above)
- Valid Pharmacist ID

**For Non-ODB recipients**

When submitting a claim for a person who does not have ODB coverage, pharmacists must submit the following information:

- Patient Gender: 'F' = female; 'M' = male
- Patient Date of Birth: Valid YYYYMMDD
- Patient's Ontario Health Card number\*
- Intervention codes:
  - PS: Professional Care Services
  - ML: Established eligibility coverage (i.e., 1 day of the Plan 'S' coverage)
- Carrier ID: 'S'
- Drug Identification Number (DIN): as per the publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine administered
- Valid Pharmacist ID

**For patients without an Ontario health number**

When submitting a claim for any eligible person who does not have an Ontario health number, pharmacists must submit the following information:

- First Name: Patient's first name
- Last Name: Patient's last name
- Patient Gender: 'F' = female; 'M' = male
- Patient Date of Birth: Valid YYYYMMDD

- Proxy patient ID: 79999 999 93
- Intervention codes:
  - PS: Professional Care Services
  - PB: Name entered is consistent with card
- Valid Pharmacist ID

## Exclusions and Restrictions

- If a patient does not have a valid Ontario health card number, a pharmacist can still administer the publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine, provided that the patient provides an alternate identification confirming their name and date of birth. In such cases, pharmacies must use the proxy patient health card ID: 79999 999 93.
- Administration of non-publicly funded COVID-19 vaccines that are privately purchased by the pharmacy does not qualify for payment.
- Pharmacists may not transfer publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine inventory to another pharmacy.
- Vaccine administration occurs at the location of the participating pharmacy premise.
- The role of pharmacists, pharmacy students, interns or pharmacy technicians administering the COVID-19 vaccine in other settings besides a pharmacy is excluded from this notice.
- A pharmacist's recommendation to a prescriber that a patient should receive a COVID-19 vaccine is not a billable service under the Pharmaceutical Opinion Program.

## **Payment for epinephrine auto-injector for emergency treatment after administration of the COVID-19 vaccine**

In the event of an adverse event resulting immediately after a pharmacist's, pharmacy student, intern or pharmacy technician's administration of the publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine, the ministry will reimburse pharmacies for the acquisition cost of the epinephrine

auto-injector up to the total amount reimbursed (see Table 2). Emergency treatment must take place in the pharmacy.

**Table 2: Epinephrine products and reimbursement if required post COVID-19 vaccine administration**

<b>PIN</b>	<b>Epinephrine Product</b>	<b>Total Amount Reimbursed</b>
09857423	Epipen 1/1000 (1mg/1mL) DIN 00509558	\$94.44
09857424	Epipen Jr. 0.5mg/mL DIN 00578657	\$94.44
09857439	Allerject 0.15mg/0.15mL DIN 02382059	\$94.44
09857440	Allerject 0.3mg/0.3mL DIN 02382067	\$94.44
09858129	Emerade 0.3mg/0.3mL Inj DIN 02458446	\$85.54
09858130	Emerade 0.5mg/0.5mL Inj DIN 02458454	\$85.54

## Billing Procedures – Epinephrine Auto-Injector for Emergency

The value indicated in the ‘Total Amount Reimbursed’ column (Table 2) will be paid by the ministry for each valid claim for administering epinephrine auto-injector.

Pharmacy staff must use the product identification number (PIN) of the epinephrine product and bill as a second claim following the COVID-19 vaccine administration claim on the same day of service. Pharmacies cannot enter the DIN, a mark-up or a dispensing fee in the claim.

The ministry does not accept paper claims for the administration of epinephrine auto-injector claims.

### For ODB-eligible recipients

The claim submission follows the usual process (See [Section 5](#) of the Ontario Drug Program Reference Manual) for submitting claims on the HNS with the following additional information:

- Intervention code ‘PS’: Professional Care Services
- Product Identification Number (PIN): as per the epinephrine auto-injection administered (see above)
- Valid Pharmacist ID

### **For Non-ODB recipients**

When submitting a claim for a person who does not have ODB coverage, pharmacists must submit the following information:

- Patient's Ontario health card number\*
- Intervention codes PS: Professional Care Services
- Product Identification Number (PIN): as per the epinephrine auto-injection administered (see Table 2 above)
- Valid Pharmacist ID code must be included with the claim

### **\*For patients without an Ontario health number**

When submitting a claim\*\* for any eligible person who does not have an Ontario health number, pharmacists must submit the following information:

- First Name: Patient's first name
- Last Name: Patient's last name
- Patient Gender: 'F' = female; 'M' = male
- Patient Date of Birth: Valid YYYYMMDD
- Proxy patient ID: 79999 999 93
- Intervention codes:
  - PS: Professional Care Services
  - PB: Name entered is consistent with card
- Valid Pharmacist ID

### **Restrictions on Epinephrine Auto-Injection**

Epinephrine auto-injection will not be reimbursed in the following situations:

- Providing the epinephrine auto-injection to the patient to self-administer or take home (for example: in the event the patient may experience an adverse event after leaving the pharmacy).
- Pharmacist emergency injection of epinephrine auto-injection not due to an adverse drug reaction resulting from the administration of the publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine.

**Additional Information:**

**For pharmacy billing:**

Please call ODB Pharmacy Help Desk at: 1-800-668-6641

**For COVID-19 vaccine rollout in pharmacy:**

Please email the ministry at: [OPDPInfoBox@ontario.ca](mailto:OPDPInfoBox@ontario.ca)

**For all other Health Care Providers and the Public:**

Please call ServiceOntario, Infoline at 1-866-532-3161 TTY 1-800-387-5559. In Toronto, TTY 416-327-4282.