



April 28, 2010

Dear Physicians:

Re: Availability of pandemic H1N1 vaccine between now and the fall.

As we noted in our advisory on April 9, 2010 regarding the revisions in the shelf-life of the adjuvanted pandemic H1N1 (pH1N1) vaccine (Arepanrix), you will need to subtract 12 months from the expiry date indicated on the antigen. We have confirmed that there are many thousands of doses of Arepanrix with an updated expiry date of May 31, 2010 available at the BC Centre for Disease Control, and, until then, you can order that for your patients through the public health units of your health authorities as usual.

After May 31st there will be no unexpired adjuvanted pH1N1 vaccine available in this province. BC physicians will still have access to unadjuvanted pH1N1 vaccine of which some 70,000 doses in total remain in BC. The company's monograph for this provides information on the considerations and limitations for use in various age groups and is available on this website at: http://www.hls.gov.bc.ca/pho/pdf/pandemic/unadjuvated_h1n1_product_leaflet.pdf

It is anticipated that the unadjuvanted seasonal Trivalent Influenza vaccine (TIV) will contain pH1N1 antigen as a component. Such vaccine is expected to be available towards the end of September.

Expert opinion in Canada is that the likelihood of a third pandemic wave attributable to pH1N1 prior to this fall is low, although sporadic cases of pH1N1 continue to occur and small localised outbreaks are possible in under-immunized or non-immune communities. Although it is impossible to predict, an early fall wave of pH1N1 virus is also possible given the atypical seasonality this virus has demonstrated to date.

In light of the above, physicians may wish to discuss with susceptible high-risk patients (listed in the HealthLink BC file at <<http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile108b.stm>>) who have not yet received pandemic vaccine the option of having a dose of either Arepanrix before these vaccines expire, or of the unadjuvanted vaccine.

Sincerely,

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