
COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION FAQS

For Health Professionals	1
Eligibility to Immunize.....	1
Recruitment	3
Training	5
Implementation	6

For Health Professionals

Eligibility to Immunize

Who is eligible to support COVID-19 Immunizations?

Immunization clinics across the province will require a significant number of individuals to help provide and support the administration of vaccine. This will include performing tasks such as preparing the vaccine, providing the initial patient assessment or actual administration of the vaccine. To help support this, the Provincial Health Officer has temporarily authorized expanding the scope of practice for certain health care professionals to allow them to support the delivery of immunization-related activities.

This has been enabled through two PHO Orders – one for Regulated and Unregulated Health Professionals, and another for Emergency Medical Assistants – which can be found [here](#).

Health professions able to support immunizations include all professions which typically have immunization within their scope of practice, such as registered nurses, physicians, naturopaths and pharmacists. However, the PHO order also enables the following health professionals to help with various immunization activities in COVID-19 immunization clinics:



Last updated: April 13, 2021

- Dentists
- Dental hygienists
- Dental therapists
- Midwives, including retired and student midwives
- Retired and student RNs, LPNs and registered psychiatric nurses (RPNs)
- Podiatrists
- Retired physicians
- Eligible International Medical Graduates (IMGs)
- Anesthesia Assistants
- Medical Laboratory Technologists or Medical Laboratory Assistants
- Pharmacy Technicians
- Paramedics
- Firefighters

Who is an “eligible international medical graduate”?

Select IMGs are included in the revised PHO Order and will be able to support immunization efforts. Eligible IMGs must have:

- a medical degree from a medical school outside of Canada listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools, which includes a sponsor note indicating it is an accepted medical school in Canada,
- a medical degree that has been verified by physicianapply.ca, and successful completion of the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Exam Part 1
- proof of British Columbia residence

They will also need to meet any requirements for new hires set out by employers.

How can retired health professionals participate in the immunization campaign?

A number of retired health professionals have been given temporary ability to support immunizations, including retired physicians, nurses (RNs, LPNs and RPNs) and midwives. We encourage these professionals to participate in the immunization campaign if they are willing and able.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia is currently registering physicians who have been away from practice for three years or less on a temporary emergency registration basis. In addition, retired physicians who have been away from practice for more than three years have been granted temporary ability to support immunizations through an updated PHO Order.

Retired RNs, RPNs and LPNs who have had 1125 practice hours or more in the last five years will also be able to participate in the immunization campaign. The British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives is registering these nurses on a temporary emergency registration basis. In addition, retired nurses and midwives who have been away from practice for more than five years have been granted temporary ability to support immunizations without becoming registered, through an updated PHO Order.

What about other health professionals – how can they help?

At this time, other types of regulated health professional such as dietitians, speech language therapists, and others are not included in the PHO Order for immunizer roles.

These other types of regulated health professionals, who are registrants of a regulatory college, may be used for some immunization clinic tasks, such as obtaining initial information, patient consent and providing patient education about the vaccines, if needed. Unregulated health professionals may be able to support immunization efforts by supporting initial patient check in, or other non-clinical activities; however, this will be dependant on the local need.

What role will fire and ambulance play in the rollout? Will they also be administering vaccine?

Firefighters and paramedics have been identified as potential immunizers and have been granted the ability to support immunization efforts through the PHO orders. They will need to complete the required training.

Will the PHO Orders be updated again to add more providers?

PHO Orders have been drafted based on the best available information at this time. As the immunization campaign rolls out, they may need to be adjusted based on operational evidence or if new information is available.

Recruitment

How can these professionals indicate their interest or ability to support the immunization efforts?

Health professionals who are interested in participating in the immunization campaign, including those authorized in the PHO orders, are able to register their interest online through the COVID-19 Emergency Health Provider Registry (EHPR). The COVID-19 EHPR is a provincial resource which health authorities can access as needed to connect with health professionals who have indicated their ability to deploy during the public health emergency. At this time, the EHPR is open to a wide variety of health professionals, including those in the updated PHO orders.

You can register online with the COVID-19 EHPR by visiting <https://forms.hlth.gov.bc.ca/registry-covid-19> . If you have questions about this process, please refer to the FAQs linked to the online registration form or email EHPRQuestions@gov.bc.ca for assistance.

Please note – the EHPR is the first step for external applicants (who do not already work within a health authority) in the process of expressing interest and is the centralized, coordinated resource for all health authorities. Health authorities have their own internal processes to follow for internal applicants – if you already work for a health authority, and are interested in supporting immunizations, please follow the local processes as set out by your health authority.

Health authorities may contact individuals on the EHPR in their region, and may then ask them to complete an additional, health authority-specific registration or application process, where they may ask them to provide additional information (such as availability).

Health authorities may also be posting specific positions or expressions of interest in the future. If you apply to those specific postings, you do not need to also sign up for the EHPR. Please note that we do not anticipate everyone included in this registry will be contacted. Deployment will be contingent on actual needs in each region, which may vary as the staffing process for clinics is finalized. Nonetheless, your expression of support is greatly appreciated.

I have registered on the EHPR – now what?

Once you have registered on the EHPR, your information will be available to health authorities looking to staff immunization clinics. Health authorities will contact individuals in their region as needed. Please note that we do not anticipate everyone included in this registry will be contacted. Deployment will be contingent on actual needs in each region, which may vary as the staffing process for clinics is finalized. Nonetheless, your expression of support is greatly appreciated.

Will individuals who participate in the immunization campaign be paid?

Health authorities may use some volunteers, but the majority of positions will be paid. The method of payment will depend on whether the participant is employed directly by the HA, contracted individually or as part of a broader service contract with another employer.

Compensation for both training and immunizing will be provided and will align with applicable rates as outlined in collective agreements and employment relationships for excluded professionals.

Training

Will providers be compensated for training time?

Individuals will be compensated for their time to complete the BC COVID-19 Immunization webinars if the training is completed after they are contacted for deployment. Providers are free to complete the training prior to being contacted, but will not be compensated retroactively.

Should interested practitioners do the immunization training first, or wait until they have been contacted by a health authority to play a role?

Practitioners can decide to do the training at any time, but if done before being asked by a health authority to participate in the immunization campaign, this will not be paid time.

Who will pay for the training?

There is no cost for the immunization training. You are able to access and complete it by registering at the PHSA provincial learning hub: <https://learninghub.phsa.ca/Learner/Home>

Practitioners who have been contacted by a health authority to participate in an immunization clinic will be paid by the health authority for their time to take the necessary training.

Do all practitioners – retired or practicing – need to take the COVID-specific immunization training?

All practitioners and occupations need to ensure they are individually competent to perform the immunization activities prior to doing so.

Regulated health professionals who are authorized to provide immunizations as part of their role are not required to take training. Regulated health professionals already authorized to perform immunizations can refer to their regulatory college's guidelines/standards.

Training and other requirements for those not currently authorized to perform specific immunization activities is outlined in the PHO orders: (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus#orders>).

COVID-19 training to perform specific immunization activities is required for other regulated and unregulated health professionals and occupations (including retired professionals) as defined in a PHO Order.

Competence assessment (and technical training to perform immunization, if required) will be reviewed before an immunizer participates in vaccination clinics. As per the PHO Orders, this responsibility rests with a medical health officer or employer and must be performed by someone who can provide immunizations as a part of their regular scope of practice.

Do immunizers receive Continuing Education Credits for completing the training?

Depending on your profession or education program, you may receive continuing education credits for your work in the campaign.

Implementation

Will staff in the immunization clinics be vaccinated in advance?

It is not required that all providers participating in an immunization clinic be vaccinated, and providers do not receive the vaccine directly as a result of their participation in an immunization clinic. However, based on the Phase two immunization plan, the majority of health professionals who would be supporting immunizations should be eligible to receive their vaccine. The remaining providers would be eligible to receive the vaccine over the next few weeks.

While the timing of individual professions is dependent on geography, vaccine supply and demand, all direct health care workers will be provided the opportunity to get immunized during this timeframe. In addition, it is anticipated that those involved in the immunization clinics will utilize personal protective equipment (PPE) and [protocols](#) similar to those in use for the COVID-19 testing clinics.

Do former (retired) College registrants have any concessions on re-registration fees? Which Colleges and what are the concessions?

The BC College of Nurses and Midwives is waiving the registration fees for registrants who meet the required hours and can be registered under Temporary Emergency Registration. The College is also covering professional liability insurance for these temporary registrants.



Last updated: April 13, 2021

Will retired nurses or physicians who do not meet the practice hours be required to pay the registration fees?

No registration fees will need to be paid in these instances, as the professional will not be registrants with the College.

Can I deliver the vaccine in my own clinic?

Currently, immunization clinics are operating either under the responsibility of health authorities or through partnership between [community pharmacies and Immunize BC](#).

Can patients access the Travel Assistance Program (TAP) to travel to an immunization clinic?

No, the TAP is not available for individuals who would like to travel to get immunized. Health authorities will be ensuring that vaccination is available to rural and remote communities, so the expectation is that there will not be a need for patients to travel for immunization.