

Stakeholder Showcase

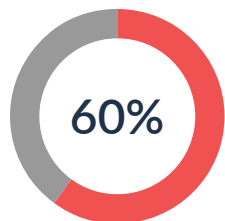
Good Practices in Influenza Campaigns to Improve Rates of Adult Vaccination

**Consensus Statement
June 2022**

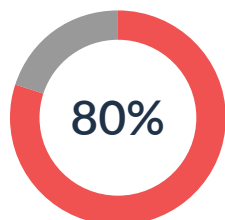
This project is supported by an unrestricted educational grant from Sanofi Canada



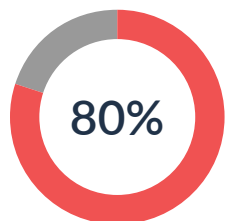
Influenza numbers in Canada per year: 12,200 hospitalizations 3,500 deaths



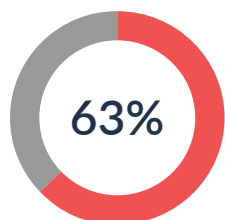
hospitalizations are adults aged 65 or older



hospitalizations are adults with underlying medical conditions



recommended seasonal influenza vaccination target for those considered at-risk



annual seasonal influenza vaccination rates

Influenza is a vaccine-preventable disease responsible for approximately 12,200 hospitalizations and 3,500 deaths in Canada each year, of which about sixty percent of hospitalizations occur in adults over the age of 65 years or older^{1,2}. In over 80% of all influenza-related hospitalizations, there are underlying medical conditions that impact severity and health outcomes in both the short and long term². Both older adults and those with underlying medical conditions are at a high risk of acquiring severe vaccine-preventable diseases such as influenza due to the presence of a weakened immune system.

Seasonal influenza vaccination is a strong public health measure for preventing hospitalizations and deaths caused by influenza, especially among at-risk populations. Although the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has recommended a seasonal influenza vaccination target of 80% for those considered at-risk, vaccination rates remain around 62% to 64% every year³. Vaccination rates often differ between children and older adults, as the emphasis is placed on childhood immunization programs and general knowledge of the protective effects of influenza vaccination is usually linked to children⁴⁻⁶.

Civil society (patient and advocacy organizations in the field of ageing) play a fundamental role in sharing essential knowledge and evidence-based resources to at-risk populations through awareness campaigns, disseminating resources, and acting as a platform for communication for their constituents. Not only do non-governmental organizations represent and advocate for and on behalf of populations most at-risk of serious complications from vaccine-preventable diseases, but they also work as trusted entities to bridge communication gaps between the government and the general population. The platform formed and held these organizations should be used to drive action toward promoting the equitable and improved uptake of seasonal influenza vaccinations.

Toward improving rates of adult influenza vaccination across Canada, the International Federation on Aging (IFA) hosted a Stakeholder Showcase in May 2022 which brought together 17 organizations across Canada to collaborate and discuss strategies and good practices to improve influenza advocacy campaigns and in turn, adult influenza vaccination rates.

Joint Commitment & Next Steps

After thorough discussion and deliberation of the experiences reflecting their members and constituents in Canada, consensus was reached around the immediate barriers to influenza advocacy campaigns that must be addressed. These include a lack of consistent funding, gaps in the collection and distribution of standardized age-disaggregated data, and communication across sectors and disciplines. Not all provincial governments have prioritized publicly funding and promoting access to influenza vaccines specifically formulated for at-risk populations such as older adults, impacting the health and quality of life of many Canadians⁷. Funding to organizational campaigns is limited often restricting their ability to implement effective and successful campaigns.

Communication across sectors is essential for health promotion and health prevention. To improve the rate of vaccination, it is important to tackle the environmental and financial barriers that are preventing influenza vaccine uptake. Improving influenza vaccine uptake in the most vulnerable population is largely dependent on government procurement, investment in infrastructure and public health campaigns which vary significantly across Canada. Furthermore, the lack of standardized age-disaggregated data prevents organizations from generating evidence-based concern towards the burden of influenza in these groups, contributing to the misinformation surrounding seasonal influenza and its impact on older adults and those with underlying medical conditions.

Representative organizations have identified the need for a unified platform for periodic knowledge sharing and exchange between organizations to discuss strategies to work against misinformation and to ensure equitable vaccine uptake across Canada. A defined set of actions were formulated from the showcase to improve seasonal influenza vaccine uptake:



Inclusive vaccine roll-out



Prioritization towards Influenza Vaccine Promotion through Multi-Sector Collaboration



A Platform for Knowledge Exchange

Joint Commitment & Next Steps

Inclusive Vaccine Roll-out

As seen with the COVID-19 vaccine, making the vaccine available in locations outside of hospitals and physicians' offices (i.e., pharmacies and local community centers) will help increase access to the vaccine for at-risk populations. Expanding the locations for vaccine roll-out will help establish multiple points of vaccine access and improve vaccine uptake.



Prioritization towards Influenza Vaccine Promotion through Multi-Sector Collaboration



Prioritization towards promoting influenza vaccination needs to be consistent across all sectors and disciplines to improve influenza advocacy campaigns targeted at older people who are 'at-risk' and thereby vaccine uptake. All stakeholders must the growing burden of influenza on older people and those with underlying medical conditions should be prioritized for all stakeholders and therefore, all stakeholders must work together to improve awareness, literacy, and access to seasonal influenza vaccination to reduce the growing burden of influenza on older people and those with underlying medical conditions.

A Platform for Knowledge Exchange

The establishment of a unified platform for periodic knowledge sharing and exchange among civil society organizations would be valuable to discuss and amplify strategies to work against misinformation and improve influenza advocacy campaigns and vaccine uptake.



In summary, influenza is a serious threat to older people and those with underlying medical conditions. Civil society and organizations recognize the critical role they play as key stakeholders across sectors to collaborate and prioritize improving influenza vaccination rates among at-risk groups. Through these actions, effective and influential influenza campaigns can be created to tackle the burden of influenza.

Acknowledgment

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Ms. Kelly Ablog-Morrant - [BC Lung Foundation](#)
 Dr. Jane Barratt - [International Federation on Ageing](#)
 Ms. Roxana Badiei - [International Federation on Ageing](#)
 Ms. Cecile Cassista - [Coalition for Seniors and Nursing Home Resident's Rights](#)
 Ms. Lynne Cyr - [Sanofi Canada](#)
 Ms. Anais Diaz - [International Federation on Ageing](#)
 Ms. Charlene Harrison - [Diabetes Canada](#)
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 Mr. Robert MacDonald - [Nova Scotia Lung Association](#)
 Ms. Elizabeth McNab - [Ontario Society of Senior Citizens Organizations](#)
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 Ms. Maham Tariq - [International Federation on Ageing](#)
 Mr. Bill VanGorder - [CARP](#)
 Ms. Karin Whalen - [Active Ageing in Manitoba](#)

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