

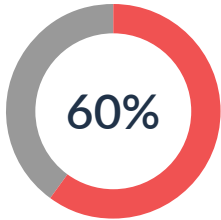
Stakeholder Showcase

Good Practices in Influenza Campaigns to Improve Rates of Adult Vaccination

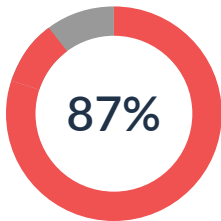
Consensus Statement
August 2022



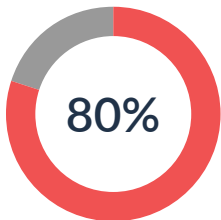
Influenza numbers in Canada per year: 12,000 hospitalizations 3,500 deaths



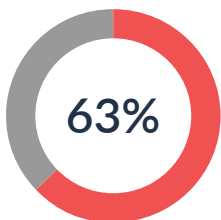
hospitalizations are adults aged 65 or older



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 more than 12,000 hospitalizations and 3,500 deaths in Canada each year, of which about sixty percent occur in adults aged 65 years or older. (1,2) In over 80% of all influenza-related hospitalizations, patients have underlying medical conditions that impact illness severity and health outcomes in both the short and long term. (2,3) Both older adults and those with chronic conditions such as diabetes, lung and heart diseases are at risk of serious complications from vaccine-preventable diseases such as influenza due to immunosenescence – age-associated changes in the immune system – and a weakened immune system. (4)

Seasonal influenza vaccination is a strong public health measure for preventing hospitalizations and deaths caused by this infection, especially among at-risk populations. Although the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) sets a vaccination target of 80% for those considered at-risk, uptake rates remain around 62% to 65% every year. (5) Widespread influenza vaccination amongst all age groups reduces the risks of influenza-induced hospitalization in older adults, thus vaccination campaigns ought to adopt age and population-specific strategies to increase national coverage. (6)

Civil society organizations (CSOs) (patient and advocacy organizations in the field of ageing) play a fundamental role in sharing essential knowledge and evidence-based resources to their constituents and hard-to-reach populations through awareness campaigns, disseminating resources, and acting as a platform for communication. Not only do CSOs represent and advocate for and on behalf of populations most at-risk of serious complications from vaccine-preventable diseases, they also are trusted sources that bridge communication gaps between governments and the general population.

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

Joint Commitment & Next Steps

After thorough discussion and deliberation on the experiences of their members and constituents in Canada, consensus was reached around the immediate barriers and strategies to improve influenza advocacy campaigns. Barriers were a lack of consistent funding, gaps in the collection and distribution of standardized age-disaggregated data, and communication across sectors and disciplines. Provincial governments have not prioritized publicly funding enhanced influenza vaccines for at-risk populations such as older adults, impacting the health and quality of life of many older Canadians. Funding for targeted messages is limited, often restricting CSOs' 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 both environmental and financial barriers. Improving influenza vaccine uptake in older adults starts with government procurement of both standard and high dose influenza vaccinations. Strong investment in public health infrastructure is also required to develop impactful vaccination campaigns that address the heterogeneous population of Canadian seniors. The lack of standardized age-disaggregated data prevents organizations from framing evidence-based concerns on the burden of influenza in these groups. In turn this contributes to misinformation and an underestimation of the impact and long term consequence of seasonal influenza on older adults and those with underlying medical conditions.

Representative organizations 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 formulated from the showcase to improve seasonal influenza vaccine uptake are:



Inclusive vaccine roll-out



Prioritization towards Influenza Vaccine Promotion through Multi-Sector Collaboration



A Platform for Knowledge Exchange

Joint Commitment & Next Steps

Inclusive and Accessible Vaccine Roll-out

Vaccination campaigns must be prioritized to begin in October so as to ensure that influenza protection is created prior to the season of most risk. (3) Expanding the locations for vaccine roll-out and promoting influenza vaccination to co-occur with the administration of Covid-19 booster shots will help consolidate 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 refine and improve evidence-based advocacy campaigns targeted at older adults who are at-risk for non-vaccination. Identifying new partners such as patient organizations that represent those who are immunocompromised to promote influenza vaccination can lead to increased vaccine outreach.

Recognizing the urgent need to reduce the growing burden of influenza on at-risk populations, stakeholders must work together to improve awareness, literacy, and access the latest evidence on influenza vaccines and vaccination.

A Platform for Knowledge Exchange

The establishment of a unified platform for periodic knowledge sharing and exchange among CSOs would be valuable to then discuss and amplify strategies to work against misinformation, improve influenza advocacy campaigns, and vaccine uptake in populations across the lifespan.



In summary, influenza is a serious threat to older adults and those with underlying medical conditions. Civil society recognizes 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 vaccination campaigns can be created to tackle the burden of influenza.

Showcase Delegates

IFA acknowledges the participation of all those who participated in the Stakeholder Showcase:

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](#)
Mr. Yves Jourdain - [Heart and Stroke Foundation](#)
Mr. Ken Kuhn - [Tri-Cities Seniors' Action Society](#)
Mr. Robert MacDonald - [Nova Scotia Lung Association](#)
Ms. Elizabeth McNab - [Ontario Society of Senior Citizens Organizations](#)
Dr. Raza Mirza - [NICE](#)
Ms. Laetitia Muteteli - [ACCESSS](#)
Ms. Connie Newman - [Manitoba Association of Senior Centres](#)
Mr. Danis Prud'homme - [FADOQ](#)
Ms. Urvashi Rathod - [International Federation on Ageing](#)
Ms. Jenna Reynolds - [Asthma Canada](#)
Ms. Daniella Shurgold - [Lung Health Foundation](#)
Ms. Jessica Sopher - [Lung Health Foundation](#)
Ms. Laura Tamblyn Watts - [CanAge](#)
Ms. Maham Tariq - [International Federation on Ageing](#)
Mr. Bill VanGorder - [CARP](#)
Ms. Karin Whalen - [Active Ageing in Manitoba](#)



Reference

1. Roy M, Sherrard L, Dubé È, Gilbert NL. Determinants of non-vaccination against seasonal influenza [Internet]. Ottawa; 2018 Oct [cited 2022 Sep 13]. Available from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/82-003-x/2018010/article/00003-eng.pdf?st=cLvangiK>
2. Public Health Agency of Canada. FluWatch annual report: 2019-2020 influenza season (August 25, 2019 to August 22, 2020) [Internet]. Ottawa; 2020 [cited 2022 Sep 12]. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/diseases-conditions/fluwatch/2019-2020/annual-report/fw-annual-report-2019-2020-eng.pdf>
3. National Advisory Committee on Immunization. An Advisory Committee Statement (ACS) National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) Canadian Immunization Guide Chapter on Influenza and Statement on Seasonal Influenza Vaccine for 2022-2023 [Internet]. Ottawa; 2022 Jun [cited 2022 Sep 12]. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/vaccines-immunization/canadian-immunization-guide-statement-seasonal-influenza-vaccine-2022-2023/naci-2022-2023-statement.pdf>
4. Lang PO, Aspinall R. Immunosenescence and herd immunity: With an ever-increasing aging population do we need to rethink vaccine schedules? *Expert Rev Vaccines*. 2012 Feb;11(2):167–76.
5. Statistics Canada. Influenza immunization in the past 12 months, by age group [Internet]. 2022 [cited 2022 Sep 12]. Available from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1310009625>
6. Cohen SA, Ahmed S, Klassen AC, Agree EM, Louis TA, Naumova EN. Childhood Hib vaccination and pneumonia and influenza burden in US seniors. *Vaccine*. 2010;28:4462–9.

International Federation on Ageing
1 Bridgepoint Drive, Suite G.238
Toronto, ON, M4M 2B5, Canada

www.vaccines4life.com

Published August 2022 © Vaccines4Life

