

January 26, 2023

TO: Saskatchewan Health Authority
Indigenous Services Canada- SK Region
Saskatchewan College of Respiratory Therapists
Saskatchewan College of Pharmacy Professionals
Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan
Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Saskatchewan
Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch

Northern Intertribal Health Authority
Saskatchewan Medical Association
Saskatchewan College of Paramedics
College of Registered Nurses of Saskatchewan

Dear Colleagues:

Re: COVID-19 Booster Dose Clarification and Revision to Interval

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) published *Guidance on COVID-19 vaccine booster doses: Initial considerations for 2023* on January 20, 2023 at

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/guidance-covid-19-vaccine-booster-doses-initial-considerations-2023.pdf>.

NACI recommends the following:

- One bivalent booster dose for all individuals five years of age and older since the start of fall 2022.
- COVID-19 booster doses should be provided using the recommended interval of six months or more since a previous COVID-19 vaccine dose or SARS-CoV-2 infection (whichever is later), as more time between exposure to vaccine or infection may result in a better immune response.

Effective immediately:

- All Saskatchewan residents five years of age and older remain eligible for **one bivalent** booster. However, those who received an original strain booster since August 2022 and have not had a bivalent booster may receive **one** bivalent booster **six or more months** after receiving the original strain vaccine.
- The interval between the last dose, or SARS-CoV-2 infection and the fall booster is **six or more months** (minimum interval of three months) for all populations, based on evidence that the duration of the immunity is better with the longer interval.

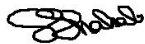
With the uncertainties around the evolution of COVID-19 disease, it is unclear when the need for additional booster doses will arise, or to who they should be offered in the event they are needed. Future booster dose decisions will be based on the current epidemiology, duration of protection from current booster doses and previous infection and information on safety, immunogenicity and vaccine effectiveness from bivalent-containing vaccines.

Clarification of booster doses following bivalent vaccine used as primary series:

- Neither the Moderna Spikevax bivalent vaccine nor the Pfizer Comirnaty bivalent vaccines are licensed to be used as a primary COVID-19 immunization series. However, the Ministry of Health supports permissive administration of the bivalent vaccines for this purpose with informed consent if specifically requested by a client or parent/guardian.
- When a client completes their primary series which includes either one or two doses of a bivalent vaccine (off-label with informed consent), they develop immunity against Omicron and the original strain. Currently they are **not eligible** for a bivalent vaccine **booster dose** as they already have immunity from the dose(s) received in their primary series.

Detailed information regarding eligible populations and intervals for booster doses is available at <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccine/vaccine-delivery-phases#booster-doses>

Sincerely,



Dr. Saqib Shahab
Chief Medical Health Officer

cc: Medical Health Officers of Saskatchewan