

Ministry of Health

Ministère de la Santé

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Medical Officers of Health, Associate Medical Officers of Health

RE: Rabies Vaccine and Immunoglobulin Shortages

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update regarding the provincial supply of publicly funded rabies vaccine and rabies immunoglobulin for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) in the management of potential human exposures to the rabies virus.

Due to higher demand over the past month, the provincial supplies of vaccine and immunoglobulin at the Ontario Government Pharmaceutical and Medical Supply Service (OGPMSS) may stock-out before they can be replenished by the manufacturers. At this time, it is anticipated that the current provincial supply will not be replenished before November 2019.

To help manage the current supply, the ministry has implemented an allocation plan for both rabies vaccine and rabies immunoglobulin for all public health units. The allocation plan was informed by recent orders placed by health units, as well as current stock on hand at OGPMSS.

The ministry will be monitoring inventory of rabies vaccine and rabies immunoglobulin across the province to assist in reviewing and providing pre-approval for every order submitted, based on the number of potential rabies exposures being investigated in your jurisdiction, as well as the number of individuals receiving PEP. We may also contact your public health unit (PHU) to re-distribute available products around the province to meet demand, if required.

The ministry requests the following from PHUs:

- Be judicious in ordering rabies vaccine and immunoglobulin and do not stockpile these products;
- Ensure that thorough risk assessments are conducted for all reported exposures, as well as for all requests for rabies biologicals submitted by physicians;
- Ensure that risk assessment outcomes and recommendations for PEP are clearly communicated to physicians to support the appropriate and judicious use of rabies biologicals;

- Submit requests for rabies vaccine and rabies immunoglobulin to IDPP@ontario.ca for review and pre-approval (Requisition Form attached) before placing your order in Panorama;
- Please notify health care practitioners in your area of the rabies vaccine and rabies immunoglobulin shortage and share a copy of this memo, if appropriate; and
- Minimize wastage of rabies vaccine and rabies immunoglobulin in your current stock by ensuring that short-dated products are utilized before dispensing those with longer expiry dates.

Updates on the provincial supply and replenishment will be communicated directly to Rabies Program Managers by the ministry's Infectious Diseases Policy and Programs Unit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Helfrich for Nina Arron". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Nina Arron
Director

c: David C. Williams, MD, MHSc, FRCPC, Chief Medical Officer of Health