

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
MINISTER'S BRIEFING NOTE

Provincial Immunization Program Assessment

Confidential Advice to the Honourable Eric Hoskins

PURPOSE

- To inform the Minister on findings on immunization in Ontario contained in the 2014 Auditor General's Annual Report

KEY INFORMATION

- Immunization records are not properly tracked and reported, and more information on immunization levels is needed
- New information system (Panorama) has not fully addressed all pre-existing issues, such as data incompleteness
- Immunization coverage tracking is lacking, and coverage rates are below the national target
- Inadequate immunization information and coverage for vulnerable groups
- Health care providers have been billing multiple vaccinations to province
- Issues with vaccination storage lead to wasted vaccines

BACKGROUND

Overview of Immunization Program and Delivery Mechanisms

- Immunization program costs should be monitored to ensure cost-effectiveness
- Criteria for determining individual public health units' immunization program funding need to be changed
- Improve new information system (Panorama) to identify areas with low immunization as well as vulnerable people when/if an outbreak occurs

Immunization Coverage Tracking

- Lack of province-wide immunization coverage targets
- Provincial immunization rates are lower than national target
- Coverage rates vary greatly across public health units
- Ministry lacks information on achieved coverage rates because information is rarely tracked in the Ministry immunization registry

Immunization in Vulnerable Groups

- Lack of immunization coverage information in licensed daycares
- Inadequacy in ensuring adult immigrants are vaccinated
- Publicly report immunization coverage rates by daycares and schools

Influenza vaccine program and vaccine storage:

- Issues surrounding duplicate billings and unaccounted for doses of flu vaccines
- Vaccine order quantities can be inaccurate leading to wasted vaccines
- Ministry policy allows bar fridges to be used to store vaccines; however, bar style fridges can be ineffective as they cause cold-chain breaks

NEXT STEPS

In response to the AG recommendations, the Ministry should:

- Monitor immunization program costs to ensure they are cost-effective
- Review the number and size of public health units
- Review Panorama for:
 - immunization record and other data completeness and accuracy
 - ability to enable health-care providers to electronically update immunization registry
- Create and monitor provincial immunization target rates
- Harmonize child immunization requirements
- Provide immigrants the opportunity to be vaccinated before arriving in Ontario
- Review and revise the Influenza Vaccine claim payment system to ensure appropriate billings
- Improve vaccination storage by discontinuing use of bar-style fridges

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