

# **PHYSICIAN COMPENSATION**

## **Services Related To H1N1 Pandemic**



Ministry of  
Health



October 19, 2009

Saskatchewan Ministry of Health and the Saskatchewan Medical Association (SMA) have agreed to the attached policy to compensate physicians for their role in providing H1N1 immunization and examining H1N1 patients in a variety of settings. The policy has been set based on the current information and assumptions used in the development of the 2009 Saskatchewan Health Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan.

The rates and policies are temporary and are for use while the province is experiencing and managing the H1N1 pandemic. Saskatchewan Health reserves the right to suspend this policy at any time, on the advice of the Chief Medical Health Officer.

The table attached details the compensation available for physicians who provide services at select stages of an H1N1 outbreak. It is the responsibility of individual health region Medical Health Officers (MHOs) to monitor and declare the stage levels of the pandemic. It is also the responsibility of the MHOs to communicate this information to each region's designated RMA representative. The stages outlined below will not necessarily be uniform throughout the province, for example, there may be concentrated pockets versus generalized outbreaks.

### H1N1 Immunization

It is expected that the H1N1 vaccine will be available in early November. Physicians who have been asked by health regions to provide the H1N1 immunization in their offices will be compensated for the additional administrative responsibilities involved. Two temporary fee codes have been established for fee-for-service (FFS) physicians to bill for this service. There will be no change for physicians compensated on a non-fee-for-service (NFFS) basis.

To assist in mass immunizations, some regions may choose to establish centralized immunization sites. FFS physicians assisting the regions in these centralized sites may choose to (1) bill the existing immunization fee code (161A) as they normally would if providing the service in their own clinic; or (2) be compensated by the regional health authority (RHA) at the rates identified in the table.

NFFS physicians choosing to assist are to be compensated in accordance with the table.

### Treatment in Stage 1

During Stage 1 of the pandemic, it is expected that physicians will operate as they normally do. There will be no change to the existing payment methods and billing amounts.

### Treatment in Stage 2

In Stage 2, a RHA may be experiencing increased influenza like illness activity. During this stage, RHAs may request physicians to block clinic time specifically to see patients presenting with H1N1 symptoms. Physicians agreeing to assist will be compensated, by the RHA, at the rates identified in the table. Payment will be made regardless of whether a H1N1 patient attends the clinic. If the appointments remain unfilled, physicians may see other patients during this time; however, they will be unable to bill FFS during the reserved hours.

### Treatment in Stage 3

During Stage 3, RHAs may activate special influenza assessment sites. If physicians agree to work scheduled shifts an influenza assessment site, they shall be compensated in accordance with the table.

Physicians agreeing to work in assessment sites or those who have been asked to hold designated times as in Stage 2, will be eligible for up to ten (10) days sick leave under Stage 2 and 3 of the pandemic. Payment will be based on individual average billings and are subject to a confirmed H1N1 diagnosis.

### Telephone Consultation Code

A temporary telephone consultation fee code (510A) has been established and can be billed in Stage 2 and 3 for patient-initiated calls. FFS physicians can bill a maximum of two telephone consultation codes per day per patient (\$16.30 per consult) for an assessment of a potential H1N1 patient; provided that the patient is either in a geographically remote location or cannot reasonably see the physician in-person. No after-hour or age premiums are payable on this code.

**Note:** The main responsibility for telephone consultations remain with HealthLine Saskatchewan. However, in instances where physicians do take calls and provide advice to their patients over the phone rather than seeing the patient directly, a temporary fee code has been created.

### **Other items:**

#### H1N1 Planning and Management Activities

If a physician is asked by a RHA and agrees to participate in the planning and management of pandemic activities, the physician should be compensated by the region at the base hourly rate of \$156.00 per hour (or \$225.00 per hour if the planning and management activities are held during scheduled office hours and the physician continues to incur office overhead expenses).

The hourly rate is available to physicians who are not currently compensated through another source for such activity.

#### Eligibility Order Form for Amantadine, Zanamivir and Tamiflu

If a RHA requires the physician to examine a patient in long term care and complete an eligibility form for Amantadine, Zanamivir or Tamiflu, the physician may bill the existing partial assessment fee code (5B).

If you have additional questions about this policy, please contact the SMA office by telephone at (306) 244-2196; toll free at 1-800-667-3781; by fax at (306) 653-1631; or by email at [allan@sma.sk.ca](mailto:allan@sma.sk.ca)

**Physician Compensation – Services related to H1N1 Pandemic**

	<b><u>Immunization Physician Office</u></b>	<b><u>Immunization Centralized Site</u></b>	<b><u>Stage 1 Treatment Status Quo Clinic Operations **</u></b>	<b><u>Stage 2 Treatment Applicable only when region has requested a clinic to reserve times for H1N1 patients</u></b>	<b><u>Stage 3 Treatment Scheduled Shifts at Flu Assessment Site</u></b>
<b>Fee-For-Service Physicians:</b> Option 1 – Stay FFS	Bill MSB temporary code 500A (\$33.23) when providing H1N1 immunization in conjunction with a partial assessment (no 5B billed) (age and time of day premiums apply)  Bill MSB temporary code 505A (\$18.33) when providing H1N1 immunization without a partial assessment (time of day premiums apply)  Payment acknowledges the additional administrative responsibilities relating to administering H1N1 vaccine	Bill as per Payment Schedule (billing code 161A)  (time of day premiums apply)	Bill as per Payment Schedule	Bill as per Payment Schedule	Bill as per Payment Schedule (likely billing code 5B) + applicable after-hours premiums and age supplements  Physician sick leave allowance (up to 10 days) based on average billings (subject to H1N1 diagnosis)
Option 2 – Move to Hourly Rate  (All hourly rates include applicable time of day premiums)	Not applicable	To acknowledge continuing office overhead, RHA's shall pay: ➤ \$225 per hour (7 am - 5 pm weekdays)  After hours: ➤ \$195 per hour (weekdays 5 pm - midnight and weekends 7 am - midnight) ➤ \$234 per hour (midnight - 7 am)	Not applicable	RHA's shall pay \$225 for each hour reserved for H1N1 patients (No FFS billing allowed for patients seen during the reserved hours)  Physician sick leave allowance (up to 10 days) based on average billings (subject to H1N1 diagnosis)	To acknowledge continuing office overhead, RHA's shall pay: ➤ \$225 per hour (7 am - 5 pm weekdays)  After hours: ➤ \$195 per hour (weekdays 5 pm - midnight and weekends 7 am - midnight) ➤ \$234 per hour (midnight - 7 am)  Physician sick leave allowance (up to 10 days) based on average billings (subject to H1N1 diagnosis)

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<b>Alternate Payment Physicians</b>	<p>Paid as per Physician-RHA agreement</p> <p>(subject to mutual agreement as to changes to the agreement deliverables)</p>	<p>Paid as per Physician-RHA agreement (7 am – 5 pm weekdays) (subject to mutual agreement as to changes to the agreement deliverables)</p> <p>After hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ \$195 per hour (weekdays 5 pm - midnight and weekends 7 am - midnight)</li> <li>➤ \$234 per hour (midnight – 7 am)</li> </ul>	<p>Paid as per Physician-RHA agreement</p>	<p>Paid as per Physician-RHA agreement (subject to mutual agreement as to changes to the agreement deliverables)</p> <p>Physician sick leave allowance (up to 10 days) based on agreement rates (subject to H1N1 diagnosis)</p>	<p>Paid as per Physician-RHA agreement (7 am – 5 pm weekdays) (subject to mutual agreement as to changes to the agreement deliverables)</p> <p>After hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ \$195 per hour (weekdays 5 pm - midnight and weekends 7 am - midnight)</li> <li>➤ \$234 per hour (midnight – 7 am)</li> </ul> <p>Physician sick leave allowance (up to 10 days) based on agreement rates (subject to H1N1 diagnosis)</p>

\*\* Telephone Consultation Code - FFS physicians can use a temporary telephone consult billing code 510A (\$16.30 per consult) for an assessment of a potential H1N1 patient only if the patient is either in a geographically remote location or cannot reasonably see the physician in-person. No after-hour or age premiums are payable on this code. Maximum of two (2) 510A codes can be billed per day per patient. A call must be patient-initiated. Documentation requirements for billing this code include recording:

- time of call;
- patient name;
- patient HSN; and
- relevant clinical details including symptoms, diagnosis, treatment and follow up.

**The following websites are recommended for additional information:**

<http://www.health.gov.sk.ca>

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca>

<http://www.fightflu.ca>

<http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/influenza-update-health-providers> (contains requisition forms and patient assessment tools and treatment guidelines etc.)