

*News Release*

## **Ontario Making Shingles Vaccine Free for Seniors**

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### **First-in-Canada Program Will Save Seniors Money and Support Healthy Aging**

Ontario is the first jurisdiction in Canada to provide the shingles vaccine free of charge, saving eligible seniors approximately \$170 and helping them stay healthy.

Starting today, the shingles vaccine will be available across the province for people 65 to 70 years of age. The government is investing \$68 million over three years in order to publicly fund the vaccine, which will reduce the likelihood of Ontario seniors developing the painful infection, and reduce visits to emergency rooms and hospitals.

Shingles, also known as herpes zoster, affects more than 42,000 people every year in Ontario and can cause complications such as loss of vision and debilitating nerve pain. Studies show that the vaccine is highly effective when seniors are vaccinated between the ages of 65 - 70, and this new program aligns with scientific and expert recommendations from Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization and Ontario's Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee on Immunization.

Those who are eligible for the shingles vaccine should contact their primary care doctor or nurse practitioner to receive the vaccination.

Expanding Ontario's publicly funded immunization program to help seniors stay healthy is part of the government's plan to build a better Ontario through its Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care, which is providing patients with faster access to the right care, better home and community care, the information they need to stay healthy and a health care system that's sustainable for generations to come.