He Shoots, He Scores, He's Fired

Reuters

Senior health officials in Alberta, Canada said they had fired an unidentified worker for giving National Hockey League players preferential access to the flu vaccine. The controversy boiled over when it was revealed that players for the Calgary Flames and their families received shots on an exclusive basis one day before the province closed public flu clinics due to a shortage of the vaccine.

“Our policies on vaccine distribution are designed to ensure an equitable distribution of the vaccine to all Albertans,” Alberta Health Services Chief Executive Stephen Duckett said in a statement. “The special treatment for the Flames and their families is unacceptable to us and contrary to all of our existing protocols and processes. I apologize for this breach of our duty.”

Public outrage over the revelations showed that Canadians' love for a hockey team only goes so far during a pandemic. The health agency said it was continuing its investigation and more disciplinary action could be taken. The flap over the Flames topped a chaotic several days for mass vaccination in the province of 3.5 million residents that started with hours-long lines at makeshift clinics and ended with the abrupt halt to shots when far more people than expected showed up for them.

The Alberta authority said it would restart shots for higher-risk people such as young children and pregnant women, but it will keep vaccine from the general public for now.

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