



Health Protection Surveillance Centre

25-27 Middle Gardiner Street
Dublin, Ireland, D01 A4A3

Ph +353 1 8765300

Fx +353 1 8561299

info@hpsc.ie

www.hpsc.ie

29th April 2020

NCDHP Ref 0002

To: All General Practitioners

RE: VITAL IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUATION OF ALL IMMUNISATION CLINICS IN GENERAL PRACTICE

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to thank you for your continued hard work in these unprecedented times when all practices are under strain with the COVID 19 response.

It remains of vital importance that essential preventative services to maintain the health of the population are maintained at all times.

I am therefore writing to you to stress that all practices **MUST** maintain their childhood immunisation clinics. Unimmunised babies and young children are at increased risk of infectious diseases, which would in turn put increased pressure on the healthcare system. There is concern for the resurgence of vaccine preventable diseases, like measles, if children are unimmunised when restrictions are lifted.

The elderly and those in risk groups who become eligible for vaccines should also be immunised as usual to ensure they are protected.

The Coronavirus Citizens Survey conducted by NUI Galway only last week, found that 32% of people had postponed medical treatment or check-ups including parents reporting postponing childhood immunisations. Reasons for this included healthcare professionals not seeing patient at the moment, individual not wanting to burden the health service or worries about catching COVID19 while attending the appointment.

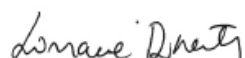
The HSE is working to raise awareness with parents about the importance of continuing to attend immunisation appointments as scheduled and to reassure patients that practices are following current HSE guidelines on infection control. The National Immunisation Office has also put together some advice for parents, which you may like to share:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/news/parent-covid-advice-31032020.jpg>

Please ensure that immunisation services are continuing, that parents and guardians are aware that they must attend to protect their children and provide them with any assurance they require that it is safe to do so.

Orders of vaccines should be placed via the normal route and deliveries of vaccines will continue throughout this time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lorraine Doherty".

Dr Lorraine Doherty
National Clinical Director Health Protection
MCRN: 01555