

**August 2014**

**To: Each Pharmacist**

**IMPORTANT NEWS**

**Re: Influenza Vaccination Campaign 2014/2015**

Dear Colleague,

This letter contains important information about the 2014/2015 influenza vaccination campaign.

The World Health Organization has recommended that the seasonal influenza vaccines for the 2014/2015 season (Northern Hemisphere winter) contain:

- ◆ an A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus
- ◆ an A/Texas/50/2012 (H3N2)-like virus
- ◆ a B/Massachusetts/2/2012-like virus

There are no changes for the 2014/2015 HSE seasonal influenza vaccination campaign:

- ◆ The groups that community pharmacists will be eligible to vaccinate are
  - all those aged 18- 64 years in the at risk groups (as outlined overleaf)
  - all those aged 65 years and older
- ◆ Only one seasonal influenza vaccine will be in use – **Influvac** manufactured by **Abbott** which comes in packs of 10 pre filled syringes.
- ◆ There will be two additional scheduled fortnightly deliveries to pharmacies to facilitate supply of influenza vaccine. There will be no unscheduled deliveries.
- ◆ Patient held vaccination record cards will be sent with your vaccine delivery which should be completed and given to your patients after vaccination.
- ◆ New posters for display and a supply of leaflets for your patients will be sent to you shortly.

Seasonal influenza vaccine is provided free for all those aged 65 years and over, those in at-risk groups and healthcare staff (as outlined in the attachment). Those that do not have a medical card or GP visit card will be liable for a fee set by you. Claims for the vaccination of medical card or GP visit card holders in the groups as per the attachment can be made through the PCRS.

The seasonal influenza vaccine supplied by the HSE National Cold Chain Service (NCCS) is specifically for those in the at risk groups. Vaccine for individuals outside of these groups can be obtained through the private market.

Further information about the influenza vaccination campaign including a frequently asked questions section about the enclosed recommendations is available on the National Immunisation website [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie) and will be sent to you with the information materials.

If you wish to order more information materials please visit [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie) and order materials from there. Please set up an account if you do not have one already to order larger quantities of leaflets and posters.

Additional details can be found in the 2014 Influenza chapter of the Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland which will be available by early September at <http://www.immunisation.ie/en/HealthcareProfessionals/ImmunisationGuidelines/>

**Actions required by you:**

1. If you are not registered with PCRS for participation in the HSE seasonal influenza campaign and wish to take part in 2014/2015 please contact PCRS. Once registered PCRS will notify the NCCS who will contact you about ordering vaccine supply. Please note it takes up to 5 working days to set up a new account with NCCS.
2. If you are registered with PCRS
  - place your order for Seasonal Influenza vaccine (Influvac) for this year's campaign with the NCCS.
  - use the returns service provided by the NCCS for any remaining seasonal influenza vaccine.

Maximising uptake among at-risk groups and front-line health care workers is critical in the prevention of morbidity and mortality and your support in this regard is highly appreciated. In particular please encourage pregnant patients to be vaccinated to protect them and their infants.

If you require any further information or have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



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## **HSE SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINATION PROGRAMME 2014/2015**

### **At Risk Groups eligible to be vaccinated by pharmacists at the premises of a retail pharmacy business**

- ◆ Persons aged 65 and over
- ◆ Those aged 18 years and older
  - With a long-term health condition such as
    - Chronic heart disease
    - Chronic liver disease
    - Chronic neurological disease including multiple sclerosis, hereditary a degenerative disorders of the central nervous system
    - Chronic renal failure
    - Chronic respiratory disease, including cystic fibrosis, moderate or severe asthma or bronchopulmonary dysplasia
    - Diabetes mellitus
    - Down syndrome
    - Haemoglobinopathies
    - Immunosuppression due to disease or treatment, including asplenia or splenic dysfunction
    - Morbid obesity i.e. body mass index over 40
  - Pregnant women (vaccine can be given at any stage of pregnancy)
  - Healthcare workers
  - Residents of nursing homes and other long stay institutions
  - Carers
  - People with regular contact with pigs, poultry or water fowl