



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

Office of the Chief Clinical Officer  
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**BY EMAIL ONLY**

**Deputy Pádraig O'Sullivan**

Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2  
Email:

Date: 23 February 2021

**PQ 6419-21 (178) To ask the Minister for Health if pharmacists will be administering the Covid-19 vaccine to the over 70's; if not, if consideration will be given to including them in the roll-out (details supplied);and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

*"I am contacting you in relation to an issue that gives me cause for concern that has been recently notified to me by the Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) in relation to the rollout of the Covid 19 Vaccine in Pharmacies and GP surgeries.*

*I have been informed that GP's will have sole authority to vaccinate all patients aged 70 years or older. The IPU has told me that, even though we will be theoretically allowed to vaccinate patients over 70, we simply will not receive any vaccines from the HSE to do so until GPs have completed this job, which I assume will take weeks if not months.*

*To be clear Michael, I have vaccinated patients every year for the last decade for the flu vaccine. I have patients aged over 70, 80 and more coming into me every year for their flu vaccine. They come to be simply because they live close by, they find me convenient and won't be left waiting by me for a long time to get their vaccination. I have one woman in particular who lives on North Main Street who is over 80 years old who finds it extremely difficult to get to her GP at any stage due to lack of transport and her inability to walk up a hill where her GP is located. We meet this woman everyday. For me to have to tell this woman that I can't vaccinate her for Covid 19 because of a HSE rule that only her GP can do it makes no sense. I can guarantee this woman will not bother attending her GP for this vaccine, and even if she does attend once, to get her back in 3 weeks time for a second vaccination will be a nightmare. We meet this woman everyday in our pharmacy and we know she would accept the Covid Vaccine from us.*

*To be clear, there is no clinical reason why pharmacies cannot vaccinate any patient over 70 years old. We have training and safeguards in place to deal with any adverse event that may occur from the vaccination process. No medicines regularity authority has recommended this. I accept there may be a shortage of vaccines at different stages, but allowing GPs to have sole authority to vaccinate patients over 70 years of age will result in the delay of some of those patients getting vaccinated. And that lady I have just described, of which there will be plenty more like her, will suffer delays as a result and that goes against the aims of the vaccination program".*

Dear Deputy O'Sullivan,

Thank you for your representation. There has been an ongoing process of engagement established since the Covid-19 Pandemic commenced, involving senior HSE clinical and management staff with Community Pharmacists involving the Irish Pharmaceutical Union and Pharmaceutical Society of

Ireland. This has provided the basis for regular communication on the evolving situation with Community Pharmacists and through them their wider pharmacy network.

Community pharmacists will play an important role in the delivery of the vaccination programme in accordance with the agreed National Vaccination schedule. Community Pharmacy will also have a role in the vaccination programme that is extended to the general population.

From the outset, in the planning of the overall programme, it was not intended that Pharmacists would be involved in the vaccination of the initial cohorts of older persons and those with chronic conditions over 70 years of age but rather it was determined given the clinical and operational parameters involved that it was more appropriate that this more vulnerable cohort would be vaccinated through General Practice based on a number of clinical considerations.

I hope this provides you with assistance,

Yours sincerely



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Sharon Hayden  
General Manager  
Office of the CCO