



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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18th February 2021

Deputy Joe McHugh,
TD
Dail Eireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ8327/21: To ask the Minister for Health if there are issues with the manufacturing of the pneumonia vaccine given that there appears to be a shortage in supply in recent months (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter."

Dear Deputy McHugh,

The above PQ has been forwarded to my Department for direct response to you on same.

There is only one manufacturer of pneumococcal PPV23 vaccine, which has limited manufacturing capacity. All vaccines are manufactured to forecasted volumes which are placed in excess of two years in advance. The next planned delivery is Q2 2021. This is the normal delivery time for shipments to Ireland and that time has been in the planning since Q1 2020. Not all EU countries have PPV in their National Programmes and though some have planned to do so they have been unable to roll out due to vaccine supply issues. For more than 15 years GPs in Ireland have been receiving sufficient PPV23 vaccines for the appropriate cohort. In 2020, orders of PPV23 vaccine by GPs from the National Cold Chain Service increased significantly to more than double the cohort turning 65 years. Within 2 months GPs ordered and received their year's allocation of PPV23 vaccine and this should have been administered to all those turning 65 years and all those at medically at risk as per National Immunisation Advisory Committee immunisation guidelines. There has been no change in the eligible at-risk groups for PPV 23. PPV23 can be administered at any time of the year and anyone who is 65yrs or older should only receive one dose.

The National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC), which is an expert committee of the Royal College of Physicians in Ireland makes recommendations on vaccination policy immunisation guidelines gives advice in Chapter 16 of the National immunisation guidelines on all those who are considered to be in the high risk (Group A) for invasive pneumococcal disease.

This information is available at

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/guidelines/chapter16.pdf>

There are doses currently available for those who are considered to be in a high risk group for invasive pneumococcal disease.

I trust this information will be of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Kelleher', with a horizontal line underneath.

DR. KEVIN KELLEHER, FFPHM, FFPHMI
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