

Cian O'Callaghan
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.

3rd February 2021

REPDR/21/8461 - To ask the Minister for Health if community halls and other suitable larger venues will be used for Covid-19 vaccination to ensure better compliance with social distancing and ventilation requirements; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Cian O'Callaghan

Deputy O'Callaghan,

I refer to your recent parliamentary question which was passed to the HSE for response.

The HSE is progressing with the implementation of the vaccination programme in line with the nationally agreed guidance established by the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC).

In the context of the recent decisions with regard to the use of mRNA vaccines for over 70s (Cohort 3) the HSE worked closely with the IMO, as the representative body for General Practice, on developing an approach and plan to ensure safe and effective distribution and administration of the vaccine as early as possible to over 70s. The plan having been agreed with the IMO was incorporated in the overall HSE operational model and guidance which was developed through a collaborative process involving a working group with senior HSE clinical and management input together with IMO and ICGP representation.

Having regard to the clinical and operational parameters involved, following discussion with the IMO, three distribution models were agreed. In the majority of circumstances patients will be vaccinated at their own GP surgery – however arrangements have also been made for a number of GP Vaccine Clinics e.g. Helix DCU, Merlin Park Galway and MTU in Cork. Arrangements have also been made for a buddy up system where some practices will partner together in delivering to their patients over 70.

Due to the clinical, operational and logistical exigencies given the nature of the vaccine there are a range of transportation, storage, delivery and security considerations around the vaccines which have been taken into account and which require the vaccines to be delivered within the model as set out if the HSE are to be in a position to assure consistently safe and effective distribution and administration of the vaccine. In this context it has not been possible to facilitate the accommodation of requests for deployment of clinics in local halls and centres notwithstanding our recognition of the motivation and good intentions of all involved.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Kenny

General Manager
Community Strategy & Planning