

Réada Cronin TD
Leinster House,
Dublin 2

12th May 2021

PQ 14257/21 - To ask the Minister for Health the instruction that has issued to general practitioners and specialists as to which group decides the severity of disease for vaccination classification given that some patients are being referred by general practitioners to specialists and from those specialists back again to general practitioners in the pursuit of such classification of severity and consequent vaccination placement; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Réada Cronin

Deputy Cronin,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Since the commencement of the Covid-19 Pandemic in early 2020, the HSE through the Chief clinical Officer has in place a forum for ongoing engagement for General Practice involving a senior group of Clinical and Management Staff from the HSE with senior colleagues from the IMO and the ICGP. More recently, since early 2021 with the rollout of the Vaccination Programme a specific working group has been in place of HSE and GP representatives through which the Operating Guidance and a range of other Clinical and logistical matters have been dealt with in supporting General Practice.

Specifically in relation to the rollout of Cohort 3 (over 70s) Cohort 4 and 7 (Medically Vulnerable), the HSE has in place an ongoing process of engagement with the IMO in dealing with the rollout of the Vaccination Programme in agreeing the arrangements and detailed plans to apply.

The HSE has reached agreement with the IMO in relation to the vaccination of Cohorts 4 (patients at very high risk), and 7 (patients at high risk) in line with this new NIAC Clinical Guidance and a re-calibrated plan was communicated by the IMO.

A significant number of those in Cohort 4 have been vaccinated through the acute settings. While GPs may vaccinate any patients from within this Cohort, GPs are asked to focus on those with Diabetics with HbA1c > 58mmol in last 12 months, Obesity – BMI > 40, Chronic Resp. Disease – on home oxygen or hospitalized in past 12 months. In respect of those in cohort 7, GP's have been asked to identifying and administering vaccine to the majority of this cohort. If it emerges that for any reason some patients in the very high risk cohort 4 have not been captured they will be accommodated as GP's work through cohort 7.

The overall approach envisages commencing in GP practices and this began on the week of 26th April with the prioritisation of those in the very high risk cohort (cohort 4) 3 /4 week period and moving seamlessly onto those in the high risk cohort (cohort 7).

I hope the above is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Liam O'Sullivan

Community Strategy and Planning

