



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Office of the Chief Clinical Officer
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Ospidéal Dr Steevens|Lána Steevens|Baile Átha Cliath 8|D08 W2A8

BY EMAIL ONLY

Deputy MaryLou McDonald TD

Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2
Email:

30/03/2021

PQ 16902 To ask the Minister for Health the criteria that will be applied in respect of persons with severe asthma who are currently categorised as group 7 in the COVID-19 Vaccine Allocation Strategy to determine continuous or repeated use of systemic corticosteroids; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy McDonald

Thank you for your representation.

In comprising the initial Vaccine Allocation Strategy, the National Immunisation Advisory Council (NIAC) listed several conditions associated with increased risk of severe disease and death. In the intervening period, national and international evidence has become available which has enabled a more detailed analysis of underlying conditions that may increase the risk of developing severe disease or death.

The NIAC has now been able to more comprehensively identify those medical conditions and to distinguish between those which place a person at very high or high risk of severe disease if they contract the virus. Medical conditions and the magnitude of the risk they pose will continue to be monitored and periodically reviewed.

The NIAC continues to monitor data around this disease and indeed emerging data on effectiveness of vaccines on a rolling basis. Further details are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/b44b2-minister-donnelly-announces-update-to-vaccine-allocation-strategy/>

The ongoing review process will continue to look at the other priority groups yet to be vaccinated, along with the competing needs of those working or living in high-risk situations, carers who deliver essential services to highly dependent individuals in the home setting, and those who are socially vulnerable/disadvantaged.

It is important to emphasise that vaccination is only one part of our response to the prevention of COVID-19 infection. People who are vaccinated need to continue with all the public health measures that have been proven to reduce the risk of infection, i.e., limiting our social contacts, physical distancing, wearing a mask, hand hygiene, cough etiquette and avoiding non-essential travel until a sufficiently large proportion of the population are immune.

I hope this provides you with assistance,

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharon Hayden", written in a cursive style.

Sharon Hayden
General Manager
Office of the CCO