



Reidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláimie  
Health Service Executive

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To/ Each Pharmacist

### Re: Important News

Dear Colleague,

This letter contains important information about the 2017/2018 influenza vaccination campaign.

The World Health Organization has recommended that the seasonal influenza vaccines for the 2017/2018 season (Northern Hemisphere winter) contain:

- an A/Michigan/45/2015 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- an A/Hong Kong/4801/2014 (H3N2)-like virus;
- a B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus

### For 2017/2018

Please note the following recommendations from the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) - these will be included in revised chapters of the Immunisation Guidelines:

- Influenza vaccination is strongly recommended annually for all cancer patients. If a person receiving chemotherapy has not received influenza vaccine 2 weeks or more before commencing treatment, the vaccine should be given during chemotherapy.

If a person given the vaccine during chemotherapy finishes their treatment during the same influenza season, they should be given a second dose at least 4 weeks after the first dose.

- Two doses of influenza vaccine 4 weeks apart are only required for adults in the following groups who are receiving the vaccine for the first time
  - post haematopoietic stem cell transplant
  - post solid organ transplant
  - who received the vaccine while on chemotherapy and who have completed their treatment in the same season
- Only one seasonal influenza vaccine will be in use – **Inactivated Influenza vaccine (Split Virion) BP** manufactured by **Sanofi Pasteur** which comes in packs of 10 pre filled syringes.
- There will be fortnightly deliveries to pharmacies from September to November to facilitate supply of influenza vaccine.
- Patient held vaccination record cards will be sent with your vaccine delivery which should be completed and given to your patients after vaccination.

- New posters for display and a supply of leaflets for your patients will be sent to you shortly.

Seasonal influenza vaccine is provided free for all those aged 65 years and over, those in at-risk groups including pregnant women and healthcare workers (as outlined in the attachment). Those that do not have a medical card or GP visit card will be liable for a fee set by you. Claims for the vaccination of medical card or GP visit card holders in the groups as per the attachment can be made through the PCRS.

The seasonal influenza vaccine supplied by the **HSE National Cold Chain Service (NCCS)** is specifically for those in the at-risk groups. Vaccine for individuals outside of these groups can be obtained through the private market.

Further information about the influenza vaccination campaign including a frequently asked questions section about the enclosed recommendations is available on the National Immunisation website [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie) and will be sent to you with the information materials.

If you wish to order more information materials please visit [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie) and order materials from there. Please set up an account if you do not have one already to order larger quantities of leaflets and posters.

#### **Actions required by you:**

1. If you are not registered with PCRS for participation in the HSE seasonal influenza campaign and wish to take part in 2017/2018 please contact PCRS. Once registered PCRS will notify the NCCS who will contact you about ordering vaccine supply. Please note it takes up to 5 working days to set up a new account with NCCS.
2. If you are registered with PCRS
  - use **the online vaccine ordering system** from the NCCS to place your order for Seasonal Influenza vaccine (*Inactivated Influenza vaccine (Split Virion) BP*) for this year's campaign.
  - use the returns service provided by the NCCS for any remaining seasonal influenza vaccine.

Maximising uptake among at-risk groups and front-line health care workers is critical in the prevention of morbidity and mortality and your support in this regard is highly appreciated. In particular please encourage pregnant patients to be vaccinated to protect them and their infants.

If you require any further information or have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr Kevin Kelleher**  
**Assistant National Director, Health and Wellbeing, Public Health and Child Health**  
**Medical Council Registration Number: 19719**

## HSE SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINATION PROGRAMME 2017/2018

### At Risk Groups eligible to be vaccinated by pharmacists at the premises of a retail pharmacy business

- ◆ Persons aged 65 and over
- ◆ Those aged 18 years and older
  - With a long-term health condition such as
    - Chronic heart disease including acute coronary syndrome
    - Chronic liver disease
    - Chronic neurological disease including multiple sclerosis, hereditary and degenerative disorders of the central nervous system
    - Chronic renal failure
    - Chronic respiratory disease, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cystic fibrosis, moderate or severe asthma or bronchopulmonary dysplasia
    - Diabetes mellitus
    - Down syndrome
    - Haemoglobinopathies
    - Immunosuppression due to disease or treatment, including asplenia or splenic dysfunction and all cancer patients
    - Morbid obesity, i.e. body mass index over 40
- ◆ Pregnant women (vaccine can be given at any stage of pregnancy)
- ◆ Healthcare workers
- ◆ Residents of nursing homes and other long stay institutions
- ◆ Carers
- ◆ People with regular contact with pigs, poultry or water fowl