



## By Email Only

To: Mr Liam Woods, Ms Yvonne O'Neill

For further distribution to Hospital and Mental Health Clinical Directors, Heads of Service, Directors of Nursing, Chief Operating Officers and other relevant members of staff

Re: Guidance regarding Consent for COVID 19 Vaccination of Hospital Inpatient Population

Date: 15 March 2021

Dear Colleagues

The implementation of the COVID 19 Vaccination programme in acute hospitals is underway. There will be communication shortly about the operational principles. The purpose of this memo is to address issues regarding consent for vaccination and how this can best be achieved in acute hospitals (which may include acute mental health units).

The same general principles apply in acute hospitals as elsewhere. There are, however, some specific issues in acute hospitals that it is worth considering in advance to ensure smooth implementation of vaccination and consent for vaccination, and I would be grateful if you could bring this memo to the attention of relevant staff in your organisation.

It is important for all hospitals that they have mechanisms to

- Identify the relevant patients, initially those aged 70 years and more, and whether vaccination is appropriate for the individual patient.
- Identify patients who may require additional support to provide consent or whose will and preferences must be elicited. Early identification of patients in this category is particularly important so that appropriate supports can be provided.
- Identify those patients suitable for vaccination who are wards of court. The President of the High Court has issued specific directions regarding how the consent process and vaccination should operate for Wards and these must be followed. Early identification of Wards is essential because the Ward and the Guardian ad Litem (court appointed representative/ GAL) or Committee should be given as much advance notice of vaccination as possible. Further details of these directions are provided in a separate memo.
- Identify who is going to seek, and document, consent for vaccination from patients and
- Identify who is going to perform the vaccination.

Consent for vaccination can be sought by a health or social care worker who is themselves familiar with the important information about the purpose, benefits and risks of the vaccine that they need to explain to the patient. In general, someone who knows the patient and how best to communicate with them may be the most appropriate person to seek consent. However, this may not always be possible when implementing Covid vaccination in acute hospitals.

It is recognised that not all hospitals will take the same approach to implementing vaccination.

- In some hospitals, the professionals who, for example, seek consent from the patient, may be different from those who actually perform the vaccination.

- In others, a dedicated vaccination team may take on all of these roles, although consultation with other health and social care professionals may be needed. For example, current guidance is that some patients may be so ill or so close to the end of life that vaccination may not be appropriate. Identifying such patients may require discussion with the treating clinical team.

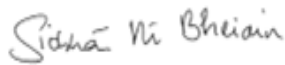
Guidance documentation and webinar content is available to support staff in the process of Consent for Vaccination and this information is being updated intermittently:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/covid19vaccineinfo4hps/>.

A webinar directed at acute hospital staff involved in the vaccination programme has been organised for Tuesday 16 March @ 1pm- 2.15pm: ***Supporting the consent process for the vaccination programme against Sars-CoV-2 (Covid 19) in Acute Hospitals***. [Click here to register for the webinar](#). The recording will be available via the weblink above after the event.

Please share this memo immediately with all relevant members of staff.

Yours sincerely



**Dr. Siobhán Ní Bheirne, MCRN: 15579**  
**National Lead for Integrated Care**

Cc: Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer  
Prof Martin Cormican, National Clinical Lead, Antimicrobial Resistance and Infection Control