

All vaccinating pharmacies should be supplied with Pfizer vaccine ASAP as Janssen stocks diminishing



Over 150,000 vaccines administered in Pharmacies nationwide to date

27 July, 2021 - All vaccinating pharmacies should be supplied with Pfizer vaccine as soon as possible to facilitate younger people who are waiting to be vaccinated, as current stocks of the Johnson and Johnson (Janssen) vaccine are diminishing nationwide and vaccination rates could be impacted, the Irish Pharmacy Union has advised.

As of today, pharmacies in the vaccination programme have vaccinated over 150,000 people in their local communities since the service was launched in June by Health Minister Stephen Donnelly. Over 100,000 of these have been in the 18-29 age group.

Of the almost 1,000 participating pharmacies, all were receiving the Janssen vaccine, but stocks are now diminishing rapidly, and only about 320 pharmacies are currently administering Pfizer vaccines. These were selected by the HSE on the basis that their communities are at a distance

from HSE vaccination centres. Early replenishment of Janssen vaccine supplies looks unlikely on the scale required, which will significantly affect the continuing rollout of vaccines in local communities.

IPU Secretary General Darragh O’Loughlin said: “We are seeing very strong community support for local vaccination, with thousands of applicants still coming forward and 150,000 already vaccinated. Pharmacists can continue to make further strong progress if all participating pharmacies are supplied with the Pfizer vaccine and this is particularly the case as younger people are being invited to receive a vaccine.

“Pharmacists are trained, experienced vaccinators and they are proud to be making an excellent contribution to their communities in support of the vaccination campaign. They have proven their capability and have the capacity to do a lot more.”

“The strong demand and positive feedback to date has highlighted the benefits of providing vaccination in local community pharmacies. The vaccination centres have performed admirably but they have their limitations. Travel to vaccine centres, the potential for long queues and the overall time required could be a disincentive to some people.”

“As the eligibility for vaccines now expands to younger age groups the challenges of reaching vaccination centres will become amplified for many. Younger people are less likely to have access to a car and may have less flexible employment. Pharmacies eliminate these concerns by providing a fast and convenient service within local communities. Accessibility and convenience will be key to completing the vaccination campaign and that is what pharmacies offer.

“Over half of the Irish population lives within one kilometre of a pharmacy and 85% live within 5km. Expanding pharmacy vaccine supplies would sustain almost 1,000 vaccination locations in practically every town and village in the country.”

Darragh O’Loughlin, Secretary General of the IPU concluded “The full reopening of our society depends on the pace of the vaccine roll-out. By maximising the capacity of pharmacies that pace can significantly increase.”

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