

Failure to Utilise Pharmacies in COVID Booster Programme a Major Oversight



Failure to utilise pharmacies in COVID Boosters a major oversight and will compound GP capacity problem

Pharmacies Have Administered 320,000 COVID-19 Vaccines in over 1,000 premises since June

IPU demands for pharmacy staff to receive booster vaccine

20 October 2021 The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) has criticised the failure by Minister Stephen Donnelly and the HSE to include pharmacies in the delivery of COVID-19 booster vaccinations. With reports suggesting booster vaccines are due to commence in early November, the IPU has said it is a major and inexplicable oversight that pharmacies are not included.

Darragh O’Loughlin, Secretary General of the IPU said, “While we welcome that the booster vaccine programme will commence shortly, we believe it is a major mistake not to include pharmacies in the programme.”

“The involvement of pharmacies in the COVID-19 vaccination campaign has been a resounding success. Now, as the urgency to deliver booster shots rises it is unconscionable that pharmacies are being excluded from involvement.

“This decision can only serve to slowdown the vaccination process. This will deprive people whose immunity would benefit from COVID booster shot.

“We believe it is imperative that booster vaccines be made available to frontline workers including pharmacists and pharmacy staff as a matter of priority, particularly in light of the worrying increase in infection numbers.

“Involving pharmacies is particularly important given the extreme concerns being expressed by GPs about their capacity. GPs are, by their own admission, already heavily overstretched. By excluding pharmacies from the COVID booster programme, they are needlessly compounding this GP capacity problem.

“I urge Minister Donnelly and the HSE to urgently revisit this decision. It is in everyone’s interests that they enlist the large cohort of highly experienced pharmacist vaccinators who have proven their ability to deliver vaccinations on a significant scale.

“Several months after the primary vaccination campaign started in Ireland, pharmacies were finally enlisted in June. That proved to be a turning point with tens of thousands of people able to avail of vaccines in the convenience of their own community.

“Earlier in the year, pharmacies had to campaign for a role in COVID vaccinations. Having now proven the successful role the sector can play, it is hugely frustrating to be overlooked once again. We are calling on the Minister to immediately revise this decision and include the added capacity that pharmacies can provide.”

ENDS