

IPU welcomes extension of pharmacy vaccinations to 18 to 34 year olds



- **All adults are now eligible for a vaccine for the first time**

2 July 2021: The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) has welcomed the announcement by Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly TD that pharmacies can now offer vaccinations for the 18-34 age group. From Monday, over 700 participating pharmacies will be offering the single-shot Janssen vaccine to this age group. This major boost to the country's vaccination campaign means that for the first time all adults in the country are eligible to receive a vaccine.

From the outset, the IPU has consistently campaigned for pharmacies to play an active role in the national vaccination programme. They had started providing vaccination for unvaccinated over 50s last month, but this week's change in the NIAC advice on the use of Janssen vaccines created an opportunity to significantly expand pharmacies' participation in the vaccination programme and the IPU immediately commenced discussions with the HSE on how the updated advice could be operationalised in pharmacies and an agreed plan was presented to the Minister yesterday, Thursday.

Welcoming today's announcement, Secretary General Darragh O'Loughlin said "Pharmacists are trained, experienced vaccinators. We have consistently called on the Minister and the HSE to use the skills, experience and accessibility of pharmacists in this national effort and to make vaccination available in communities nationwide. The Minister's announcement this morning is extremely positive, providing everyone in the 18 to 34 age group with the option to access to a

COVID 19 vaccine in their local pharmacy sooner than would be possible in the vaccination centres.”

Pharmacies commenced offering the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine to those aged 50-69 last month. “There has been huge demand across the country for people looking to receive vaccinations in the convenience of their local pharmacy. The feedback from the thousands of people who have been vaccinated by their local pharmacists so far has been extremely positive. With this expansion of pharmacy vaccinations the HSE is effectively creating more than 700 extra vaccination centres in towns and villages nationwide.”

Pharmacies will commence offering vaccines to the younger age groups from next week. However, the IPU has urged members of the public to make contact with their pharmacy in advance, and to be patient as it will take time for supplies to reach each participating pharmacy.

Concluding Darragh O’Loughlin secretary general of the IPU said “since the first doses of COVID-19 vaccines arrived in Ireland we have been calling for pharmacies to be utilised. We are pleased that today’s announcement allows pharmacists to support the national vaccination effort, in particular for young people who have sacrificed so much.”

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For Further Information:

Brian Harrison, MKC Communications

Ph: 087 9211841

E: brian@mkc.ie