

Pharmacies reach one million COVID-19 vaccine milestone



People urged to check eligibility for COVID-19 vaccination prior to making appointment

Irish pharmacies have now administered over one million COVID-19 vaccines, the Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) has confirmed. The IPU is encouraging all those who have not yet received their booster vaccine to come forward as well as those over 65 or immunocompromised who may be due a second booster dose. Pharmacists have also highlighted that many people who are not eligible for COVID-19 vaccination are booking appointments. They are urging people to check their eligibility before they book an appointment or attend a pharmacy for COVID-19 vaccination.

Community pharmacist and IPU President, Dermot Twomey commended the role played by pharmacies in the vaccine rollout, *"Pharmacies across Ireland have proven their immense value*

to their communities by their participation in the vaccination programme.

“As experts in community vaccination and trusted healthcare professionals, pharmacists are committed to helping deliver on the public health agenda to vaccinate people against the COVID-19 virus.”

Since pharmacists began providing the COVID-19 vaccination in June 2021, they have administered over 1 million vaccines. They are currently administering vaccines to all eligible cohorts including those over 65 and those immunocompromised individuals who are now recommended to receive a second booster. A rise in cases means that there is an increased need for the vulnerable cohorts in our communities to be vaccinated or to receive their booster doses. Pharmacies have seen strong levels of interest from the public and are currently vaccinating approximately 2,000 individuals a day.

Mr Twomey continued, *“Pharmacists are finding that a high number of people who are seeking appointments are not eligible to receive the vaccine as they are not in the targeted cohorts or may have had COVID-19 within the previous four months. This can lead to bookings having to be cancelled or to individuals making wasted journeys to their pharmacy to discover that they are not currently eligible for a booster. We would remind individuals to check their eligibility for COVID-19 vaccination prior to making an appointment. Individuals can check their eligibility by reviewing the information on the HSE website using this link: <https://www2.hse.ie/screening-and-vaccinations/covid-19-vaccine/get-the-vaccine/booking/> or by asking at their local community pharmacy.*

“The success of pharmacy involvement in this vaccination campaign underlines the value of the role we can play. Our patients want pharmacies to expand the provision of vaccines to other areas, everything from travel vaccines to the chicken pox vaccine should be available in the convenience of local pharmacies. More than 85% of the population lives within 5km of a pharmacy. So, by enabling pharmacies to vaccinate you make it easier and more convenient for people to protect themselves and our wider society.

ENDS