

Pharmacies significantly ramp up vaccination to help counteract Omicron threat



- **Half a million vaccines administered in Irish pharmacies since June**
- **Over 72,000 in the last week alone**

20th December 2021 As part of the accelerated COVID-19 Booster Vaccination Programme, Irish Community pharmacies have in recent days significantly increased the number of COVID-19 vaccinations they are administering, according to the Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU). The IPU say that the capacity and expertise of pharmacists has greatly assisted the booster campaign and pharmacies are now administering well over 10,000 vaccines a day.

The availability of COVID-19 vaccines in pharmacies since June marked a turning point in the pace of the national vaccination campaign, reaching the milestone of half a million vaccines over the past weekend. With the booster vaccine campaign now seen as Ireland's key weapon in the fight against the Omicron variant of COVID-19 the IPU has said that pharmacies are ramping up their capacity. Eligible individuals are encouraged to contact their local pharmacy for an

appointment.

IPU Secretary General Darragh O’Loughlin said, “The inclusion of pharmacies in the vaccination campaign during the summer had an immediate impact as pharmacies delivered an all hands on deck approach to get people vaccinated. With growing case numbers linked to the Omicron variant, to protect ourselves and our communities that approach was again called for in order to get boosters rolled out rapidly in Ireland. Community pharmacists have answered the call and ramped up vaccination rates considerably in recent weeks. Last Friday alone, pharmacists provided over 13,000 vaccinations – the highest daily number since we began vaccinating against COVID-19 – and have done more than 72,000 vaccinations in the last week.

“Availing of a COVID-19 booster vaccine in a local pharmacy is both easy and convenient, with pharmacies open at suitable times to the public. They represent an alternative to potentially long trips to vaccine centres and provide an accessible and efficient experience for the public.

Darragh O’Loughlin also spoke of the potential of the pharmacy sector, “Pharmacies, through the COVID-19 booster campaign, are once again proving their worth and showing how they can play a central role providing healthcare in the community. Pharmacists are trained, experienced and can alleviate the pressure on the overstretched GP sector in many ways. The contribution of local pharmacies has been evident throughout the pandemic and should be routinely utilised, not solely during times of crisis.”

Please note that the cohorts currently eligible for a booster vaccine in a pharmacy are as follows:

- healthcare workers
- people aged over 16 with underlying conditions
- people aged 40 years and over
- pregnant women