

Pharmacists have solutions to some of the Covid vaccine complications

- **Pharmacists urge Government to allow them vaccinate healthcare workers with AstraZeneca vaccine.**

4 February 2021: The Irish Pharmacy Union has urged Government to supply community pharmacists immediately with the AstraZeneca vaccine so they can start vaccinating frontline healthcare workers who have not yet been vaccinated, and other healthcare workers in line with the Government's existing Vaccine Allocation Strategy.

IPU Secretary General Darragh O'Loughlin said, "Given that the first of 400,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine are due in the coming weeks, and pharmacists are ready to start vaccinating, it makes sense for Ireland's network of over 1,800 community pharmacies to be called into action."

The IPU made this recommendation following reports that the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) has recommended that people aged 70 and over should get the Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna vaccines, rather than the AstraZeneca vaccine.

Mr O'Loughlin continued, "If community pharmacists were immediately supplied with the AstraZeneca vaccine, we could start vaccinating frontline healthcare workers who have not yet been vaccinated and other healthcare workers not in direct patient contact, and then GPs could be provided with the mRNA vaccine alternatives and all necessary support to use them for patients 70 years and older."

Mr O'Loughlin added that pharmacists must also be vaccinated as a matter of urgency to ensure patient safety; "In order to ensure that community pharmacist vaccinators are themselves offered the vaccine before vaccinating other people, as is HSE policy, an immediate plan must be put in place to arrange for pharmacist vaccination."

"Pharmacists are ready, willing, and able to play their part in this substantial national effort to get the country vaccinated. We are coming up with workable solutions to support this. We hope Government, the Department of Health and the HSE are listening."