

Pharmacists welcome decision to allow them to vaccinate outside the pharmacy premises

- Irish Pharmacy Union has been campaigning for this change

The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) has welcomed the announcement that pharmacists will be able to provide a vaccination service outside of the pharmacy premises. Calling it a “game changer”, IPU Secretary General Darragh O’Loughlin thanked Health Minister Stephen Donnelly for listening to pharmacists, who have been calling for this change for many years. “We need to do all we can to keep people safe from the flu and protect our health system from its impact. This is more important this year than ever before, as we face into a winter of dealing with two highly infectious and highly dangerous diseases – influenza and COVID-19. While we do not yet have a vaccine against COVID-19, we do against flu, and we need to encourage uptake of this vaccine by making it as easy as possible for those most at risk to access it. Broadening the locations where pharmacists can vaccinate will significantly increase uptake and will help build immunity from flu among the population.” Mr O’Loughlin said, “Influenza led to the hospitalisation of over 4,000 people in Ireland during the last flu season, which should be a reminder of the serious nature of the flu. Since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, the IPU has consistently called for a significant investment in this year’s national flu vaccination campaign, to keep people safe from flu and protect our health system from overload while we deal with the continuing impact of COVID-19, and we welcomed the expansion in the flu vaccination programme announced last month by the Minister”. “Research conducted by iReach on behalf of the IPU revealed that fewer than half of all adults (48%) have ever received a flu vaccination. This year, we need to ensure we have the highest possible uptake of the vaccine.” “The decision from Minister Donnelly to accept the IPU’s recommendation to allow pharmacists give the flu vaccine outside of pharmacy premises is a great first step in the right direction and will help us all over the coming months. We hope the Minister will also immediately put a process in place to allow pharmacists to vaccinate for pneumococcal disease and will introduce a pharmacy-based minor ailment scheme to allow patients to receive treatment for certain common ailments directly from their pharmacist”. **ENDS**