

Pharmacists welcome extension of free flu vaccine to 13-17-year olds

- Parents urged to ensure children avail of flu vaccine

11 December 2020: The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) has welcomed the decision by Government to expand eligibility for the free nasal flu vaccine for children to include teenagers up the age of 17, a policy change the IPU previously called for in November. Speaking following the announcement, community pharmacist and IPU Treasurer Ann Marie Horan said, “The decision to extend the eligibility of the free flu vaccine to teenaged children is extremely positive. Teenagers tend to have a wide range of close contacts, especially in school, and therefore vaccinating them should help maintain the low rates of flu transmission seen so far this season.” Ms Horan urged parents to avail of this vaccine “Flu is a very serious and contagious respiratory illness. While it disproportionately affects older people, it is deeply unpleasant at all ages and can have serious long-term impacts. This is a nasal spray vaccine that is quick and painless to administer, so parents should have no apprehension about availing of it. MS Horan concluded by reminding parents what is at stake; “While we wait with optimism about the roll out of a COVID-19 vaccine there is a vaccine here now to stop flu. We must all do what we can to protect vulnerable members of our community and the health service . Reducing the risk of children and teenagers spreading flu is one important step.” **ENDS**