

Pharmacists welcome plan to allow them vaccinate public against COVID-19

- **Cabinet sign-off follows agreement reached with Health Minister last night**

19 January 2020: The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) has welcomed the announcement today by Government of funding that will allow for a comprehensive community based COVID-19 vaccination campaign.

Speaking following the announcement, IPU Secretary General Darragh O’Loughlin said, “There are more than 1,800 community pharmacies located in every town, village and neighbourhood across the country. Pharmacists are wholeheartedly supportive of the vaccination campaign and ready to play a major role in helping Ireland defeat the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This deal will significantly increase the country’s capacity to deliver COVID-19 vaccinations and, with pharmacists providing vaccination in communities across the country, we will increase ease of access and overall uptake of the vaccine. Pharmacists have been administering flu and other vaccines in Ireland for over a decade and have all the training and experience required. Pharmacists nationwide stand ready to commence vaccinations just as soon as our teams get vaccinated and the vaccines can be delivered to us.”

However, Mr O’ Loughlin concluded that it is essential that pharmacy staff themselves can now be vaccinated without delay. “Pharmacists, as with anyone giving the vaccine, must be vaccinated themselves in order to do so safely. People using pharmacy services, especially medically vulnerable patients, deserve the assurance that their pharmacist and pharmacy team have been vaccinated. Any further delays in vaccinating pharmacists could severely impact the pace of the national rollout.”