

**By Email Only**

Date: February 5th, 2021

To: Ms Anne O'Connor, Chief Operations Officer

**Re: Vaccination programme update**

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Dear Colleague,

I am writing to update you on our plans for vaccination of front-line healthcare workers in the upcoming weeks. Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank you for your hard work and dedication to our patients throughout 2020 and in January 2021, which has been the most difficult month to date for all of us.

There are now three vaccines approved for administration in Ireland: the Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccines. The speed at which these vaccines have been developed is unprecedented. Regulatory agencies, research institutions and pharmaceutical companies have collaborated in ways never seen before in order to help us find a way out of this pandemic. All vaccines went through clinical trials and appropriate regulatory processes, the results of which provide us with assurances on their safety and efficacy. These vaccines are key to helping us exit this pandemic.

The first COVID-19 vaccination was administered on December 29th, 2020 and the key limiting factor in our vaccination programme is the delivery of vaccine supplies. We are distributing and administering vaccines as soon as they are delivered to Ireland. In line with the government provisional allocation grouping we are initially vaccinating residents and staff of long-term care residential facilities and frontline healthcare workers.

We want to vaccinate everyone as quickly as possible. However the supply of vaccines has not been sufficient for us to do this. We expect supplies to increase in February and the coming months as manufacturers ramp up production. Therefore, in order to ensure we protect our staff and ensure those at risk of exposure to COVID-19 are vaccinated first, we developed a guidance document for health care workers both in the HSE and other healthcare settings. This document will assist and support us in identifying our most at-risk staff and prioritising them for vaccination when supplies are limited. This guidance document is attached.

We are currently administering second doses to those who have had their first dose and will recommence administration of first doses vaccinations to frontline staff from next week. We expect to have completed first dose vaccination to all healthcare staff over the next few weeks.

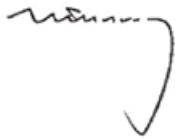
As supplies of AstraZeneca arrive in Ireland, we will be administering this vaccine to our frontline healthcare workers. This vaccine requires two doses and the evidence

demonstrates that higher efficacy is achieved with an interval of 12 weeks between the first and second dose for those under 65 years of age. The interval for those 65 to 70 years will be 6 weeks. Full details of the vaccine will be provided to you in information leaflets developed by the National Immunization Office.

We are asking all frontline staff to register on our online portal. The link to the portal is <https://www.hse.ie/hcwvaccine/>. The link will become available on Tuesday February 9th, 2021. The portal will be used to facilitate scheduling of your vaccination appointment. After registering your details, you will receive a notification with details of your vaccine appointment date and location and a link to re-access the system to consent to the vaccination. If you have any difficulties accessing the portal, please contact your line manager who will support you resolving this issue.

Once again, I would like to thank you for your hard work and dedication in protecting us all through what has been and continues to be the most challenging and difficult time in healthcare we have ever experienced. The vaccination programme has given us all great hope at the beginning of 2021 and should give protection to vulnerable patients and to our colleagues from the worst effects of this virus. I am sure we will emerge from this experience a stronger and more resilient healthcare system and proud of the work we have done in the prevention of illness and provision of care to the patients we serve.

With thanks and kind regards,



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Dr Colm Henry  
Chief Clinical Officer