KEEPING TRACK OF THE COVID-19 VACCINE

The shared learnings from the collaboration between the HSE National Immunisation Office, HSE Procurement and GS1 Ireland

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The COVID-19 vaccination programme in Ireland has been one of the most successful in the world. As well as the huge number of staff involved in the administration of the vaccines, success was also assisted by working hard behind the scenes to ensure that the vaccine programme was delivered in a safe, effective and efficient way.

Early in the programme, the HSE recognised the importance of electronically tracking the vaccine to the point of vaccination. Over the past 10 years the HSE has collaborated with GS1 Ireland on several national traceability initiatives. This article describes how the HSE and GS1 Ireland worked together to design in traceability standards for the tracking of the COVID-19 vaccine.

"Traceability is a key part of managing the vaccine process. The use of barcodes has been very beneficial, and it is evident that while it has saved time and resources, more

importantly it is giving time back to clinicians while providing accurate information for decisions. Patient safety is key and TrackVax has been a real enabler in this case," said John Swords, National Director of Procurement, HSE."

It was important for the National Immunisation Office (NIO) that no dose was wasted and that batches of vaccine could be tracked to the point of vaccination. Following an intensive design phase with the HSE project team, two software applications were developed: ScanVax and TrackVax. ScanVax allows the receipt of vaccines to the national vaccine administration system. TrackVax allows the CVC teams to identify, label, track, and report on the vaccines in their centres, allowing a much easier vaccine reconciliation process locally and nationally.

Prior to the introduction of TrackVax, the discard time was handwritten on the vials, a time-consuming process that also posed a medication safety risk. The excellent data quality from TrackVax provides the NIO

with oversight of vaccine usage, logs accurate stock level data in CVC's and keeps waste to a minimum. The software has enabled the tracking and management of nearly 50 per cent of the doses administered in the programme to date and provides daily stock reports to assist the HSE planning team.

"The feedback on TrackVax from the Senior Management Teams and the High Level Taskforce has been really positive in terms of enabling visibility of vaccine usage and it has been recognised that TrackVax has made a significant contribution to the efficient rollout of the COVID-19 vaccinations across Ireland," said Dr Lucy Jessop, Director of Public Health, HSE National Immunisation Office.

The next step is to provide ongoing traceability support for the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine in Ireland and, in time, for other vaccines.

Read the case study and watch the video to learn more https://bit.ly/3r119Lm