



**Date:** 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022

**Circular Number:** NCO-03-2022

**Second Covid Booster Programme (65 years and old and Immunocompromised 12 years and older)**

Dear Pharmacist,

As you will be aware the HSE is progressing the implementation of a Second Booster Vaccination Programme in line with the nationally agreed guidance established by the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC).

Pharmacists have already made a significant positive contribution to efforts to manage this public health crisis since the outbreak of Covid-19 in the spring of 2020 and will play a key role in the delivery of the Second Booster Vaccination Programme.

The overriding clinical imperative is to have as many of the eligible population as possible vaccinated over the coming months. This is designed to facilitate Primary Care to plan the administration of expected future Covid boosters and the Influenza Vaccines in a coordinated manner going forward.

**Eligible Population & Interval Period**

In order to maintain high levels of immunity in those most at risk of severe disease, a second booster dose of an mRNA vaccine is recommended for both those:

- over the age of 65, and
- aged 12 years and older with immunocompromise associated with a suboptimal response to vaccines (hereinafter referred to as immunocompromised).

The programme is commencing with those aged 65 years and over who are currently eligible. Pharmacists may vaccinate those patients now. The programme will start to vaccinate those who are immunocompromised as those patients become eligible for a second booster from mid May onwards when PharmaVax is further updated.



The minimum interval period is 120 days after the first booster. Where a patient has had a Covid infection, the second booster vaccine is deferred for a minimum interval period of four months following infection onset.

### **Vaccine Supply**

The vaccines to be used are:

- Moderna (Spikevax): Patients aged 65 years and over and Immunocompromised patients aged 30 years and over.
- Pfizer (Comirnaty): Immunocompromised Patients under 30 years of age. Only very limited quantities of Pfizer (Comirnaty) will be made available.

### **Ordering and Deliveries**

Pharmacies should order COVID-19 vaccines in the normal manner through the online NCCS system available at [www.ordervaccines.ie](http://www.ordervaccines.ie) and in accordance with their scheduled delivery dates.

Both Moderna and Pfizer can be ordered online. For information, Moderna comes in boxes of 200 booster doses, therefore by ordering 1, you will receive 1 box or 200 doses. Pharmacies are asked to be mindful whether they are in a position to reasonably use such a quantity at this time when considering ordering and participating in this element of service. Vaccines will be delivered with a 30 day expiry.

Pharmacies who are not in a position to rejoin the campaign at the moment will be able to participate in the Autumn campaign.

### **Recording & Claiming 2nd Booster Payments**

System changes are currently underway to enable recording of the second booster for the eligible patients.

While the second booster changes for over 65s have been completed, it will be another week (May 9<sup>th</sup>) for the changes to record second Booster doses for the Immunocompromised to be completed within PharmaVax.



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## Fees

In this context, the following fee rate will be paid to Pharmacies involved in the delivery of the Second Booster Vaccination Programme.

- The rate to be paid for vaccinations administered by Pharmacists **is €25 per booster 2 dose.**

I would like to once again express the HSE's gratitude to Pharmacists and their teams for their commendable efforts to-date as a key part of the system wide approach to managing this unprecedented public health emergency and I have no doubt that Pharmacists and their teams will not be found wanting when it comes to playing their part in the continued roll out of the Covid-19 Programme in the coming months.

Please be assured of the HSE's continued support at this time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pat Healy', written over a horizontal line.

**Pat Healy**  
**National Director**  
**Clinical Programme Implementation**  
**& Professional Development**