



**Date:** 12th October, 2021

**Circular Number:** NCO-09-2021

### **Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme – Winter 2021/2022**

**Dear Community Pharmacy Contractor,**

The seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme for Winter 2021/22 commenced on the week of the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, 2021. Orders for the Influenza vaccines have been made and delivery of same has commenced. The contracted Vaccine distributors have begun contacting participating Community Pharmacy Contractors (CPCs) to agree the scheduling of vaccine deliveries for the 2021/2022 Programme and indeed it is likely that many participating CPCs will have received initial contact prior to the receipt of this circular.

This season, three influenza vaccines will be distributed by the HSE National Cold Chain Service:

- Flud Tetra manufactured by Seqirus. This adjuvanted quadrivalent Influenza vaccine (aQIV) is a non-live influenza vaccine. It is licensed for use in people aged 65 years and over only and is the recommended vaccine for this age group. This is given intramuscularly and comes in pre-filled syringes in boxes of 10. Only one dose is required each season (regardless of medical condition). Gently shake before use. After shaking the normal appearance of the vaccine is milky white suspension.
- Quadrivalent Influenza Vaccine (QIV) (split virion, inactivated) manufactured by Sanofi Pasteur. This is given intramuscularly and comes in pre-filled syringes in boxes of 10. QIV is recommended for children aged 6 to 23 months and adults aged 18 to 64 years with chronic medical conditions, pregnant women, healthcare workers (including general practice staff and students) and carers.
- Fluenz Tetra, a live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) manufactured by AstraZeneca. This is given intranasally and comes in prefilled nasal applicators in boxes of 10. LAIV is recommended for all children aged 2 to 17 years at the time of vaccination. Vaccination of children aged 2-17 years will reduce their rates of infection and also lower transmission to others and so reduce morbidity and mortality in those in the clinical risk groups and older adults.



As normal it will be a two weekly delivery schedule to participating CPCs for this season. A copy of the letter from the HSE's National Immunisation Office detailing, inter alia, arrangements for ordering and delivery of flu vaccines is appended hereto for reference purposes.

Individual delivery calendars have been updated and have been emailed to all participating CPCs. They are also available on the National Cold Chain Service website. Notification of LAIV vaccine availability will be communicated by the National Cold Chain Service (NCSS) and distribution of vaccines will commence early-mid October.

The cohort of people to be vaccinated in the Programme is the same as last year and as mentioned above persons aged 65 years and over will receive the aQIV Vaccine, those aged 18-64 years (incl) and children aged 6 to 23 months will receive the QIV vaccine, while children aged between 2-17 years (incl) will get LAIV- nasal vaccine. Please note that Influenza vaccines supplied to your pharmacy through the NCSS are only to be administered to the patient groups described above.

The Minister for Health, with the approval of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, has determined that the existing fee rates should be maintained for the administration of the seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme for winter 2021/22:

- A fee of €15 for all QIV Influenza vaccinations (i.e. AQIV and QIV), GMS and non-GMS;
- In addition to this, each CPC will be eligible for a further payment of €100 for every 10 unique patients to whom one of the QIV Influenza vaccines is administered by the CPC;
- A fee of €20 will be made available for vaccinations using the (nasal) Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine (LAIV) for children aged from 2 to 17 years inclusive;
- In addition, each CPC will be eligible for a further payment of €150 for every 10 unique patients aged from 2 to 17 years inclusive to whom the LAIV is administered by the CPC.

In determining the fee rates for the seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme for winter 2021/22 the Minister had regard to the unique clinical, operational and logistical challenges in delivering the Programme at this time, and the special arrangements that CPCs may decide to put in place to deliver the Vaccination Programme, such as dedicated vaccination clinics etc.

All Community Pharmacy Contractors who hold a Community Pharmacy Contractor Agreement with the HSE can provide the LAIV, aQIV and QIV Influenza vaccinations when they have completed the requisite training. Training costs can be claimed back at the end of October 2021.



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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Community Pharmacy Contractors and their staff for the significant contribution made in the delivery of what was a very successful influenza Vaccination Campaign last season and I wish you and your team every success in delivering the 2021/22 seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme over the coming months.

Please be assured of the HSE's continued support.

**Yours sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pat Healy', written in a cursive style.

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