

From the Chief Medical  
Officer Dr Michael McBride



Department of  
**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

[www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

**HSS(MD) 3/2021**

**FOR ACTION**

Chief Executives, Public Health Agency/Health and Social  
Care Board/HSC Trusts/ NIAS

GP Medical Advisers, Health and Social Care Board

All General Practitioners and GP Locums (for onward  
distribution to practice staff)

OOHs Medical Managers (for onward distribution to staff)

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Stormont Estate  
BELFAST BT4 3SQ

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Your Ref:

Our Ref: HSS(MD) 3/2021

Date: 6 January 2021

**PLEASE SEE ATTACHED FULL CIRCULATION LIST**

Dear Colleague

**SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINATION PROGRAMME 2020/21 – EXTENSION  
TO 50-64 YEAR OLDS**

***Action Required***

***Chief Executives must ensure that this information is drawn to the attention of all staff involved in administering seasonal influenza vaccine.***

***The HSCB must ensure this information is cascaded to all General Practitioners, practice managers and community pharmacies for onward distribution to all staff involved in the seasonal flu vaccination programme.***

***The RQIA must ensure this information is cascaded to all Independent Sector Care Homes for onward distribution to all staff involved in the seasonal flu programme.***

**Introduction**

1. Our letter of 18 August (HSS(MD) 59/2020) advised that based on vaccine availability and the uptake rates being achieved, the vaccination programme may be extended to additional cohorts, such as all healthy 50 to 64 year olds.
2. The purpose of this letter is to inform you that it has been agreed that the programme will now be extended to individuals who will be aged 50-64 by 31 March 2021.

3. The rollout of the COVID vaccine has the potential to impact the capacity of GPs to administer the flu vaccine to this eligible cohort. The Health and Social Care Board and Public Health Agency should now work together to build upon the success of this year's community pharmacy flu vaccination service and enable access to flu vaccination for this cohort through participating community pharmacies, for those individuals who cannot get the vaccine through their GP or who prefer to access vaccination at their local pharmacy.
4. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all who have worked hard to administer flu vaccines so far this year. Uptake rates have increased from this time last year which is to be commended due to the challenges the programme has faced so far.
5. I would encourage those who have yet received their flu vaccine to make sure they are vaccinated as soon as possible to ensure the HSC is prepared for normal winter pressures and unexpected events, and to protect staff from the potentially serious consequences of concurrent infection with influenza virus and SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Michael McBride**  
Chief Medical Officer



**Prof Charlotte McArdle**  
Chief Nursing Officer



**Mrs Cathy Harrison**  
Chief Pharmaceutical  
Officer

### **Circulation List**

Director of Public Health/Medical Director, Public Health Agency (*for onward distribution to all relevant health protection staff*)  
 Assistant Director Public Health (Health Protection), Public Health Agency  
 Director of Nursing, Public Health Agency  
 Assistant Director of Pharmacy and Medicines Management, Health and Social Care Board (*for onward distribution to Community Pharmacies*)  
 Directors of Pharmacy HSC Trusts  
 Director of Social Care and Children, HSCB  
 Family Practitioner Service Leads, Health and Social Care Board (*for cascade to GP Out of Hours services*)  
 Medical Directors, HSC Trusts (*for onward distribution to all Consultants, Occupational Health Physicians and School Medical Leads*)  
 Nursing Directors, HSC Trusts (*for onward distribution to all Community Nurses, and Midwives*)  
 Directors of Children's Services, HSC Trusts

RQIA (*for onward transmission to all independent providers including independent hospitals*)  
Medicines Management Pharmacists, HSC Board (*for cascade to prescribing advisers*)  
Regional Medicines Information Service, Belfast HSC Trust  
Regional Pharmaceutical Procurement Service, Northern HSC Trust  
Professor Donna Fitzsimons, Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery QUB  
Professor Sonja McIlfatrick, Head of School of Nursing, University of Ulster  
Caroline Lee, CEC  
Donna Gallagher, Open University  
Professor Paul McCarron, Head of School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, UU  
Professor Colin McCoy, Head of School, School of Pharmacy, QUB  
Professor Colin Adair, Director of the NI Centre for Pharmacy Learning and Development, QUB  
Joe Brogan, Assistant Director of Integrated Care, HSCB  
Donncha O'Carolan, HSCB (*for distribution to all General Dental Practitioners*)  
Raymond Curran, Head of Ophthalmic Services, HSCB (*for distribution to Community Optometrists*)  
Trade Union Side

This letter is available on the Department of Health website at  
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/professional-medical-and-environmental-health-advice/hssmd-letters-and-urgent-communications>