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To: GP Practice Leads
GP Practice Managers

Insert Date

Dear Colleagues

Guidance for GP practices in England: advice for patients aged 65 years and over regarding 2018/19 flu vaccination

The adjuvanted trivalent vaccine (aTIV) has been recommended for people over 65 years as it gives the best available protection against flu. The manufacturer of aTIV, Seqirus, has confirmed there is enough vaccine supply available to the NHS in England to meet expected demand. By mid-November, the complete order for 8.3 million doses of aTIV will have been delivered to GP practices, pharmacies and other providers in England, so vaccine availability in total exceeds anticipated requirements. In 2017/18, around 7.4million over 65s were immunised against flu.

As previously advised (see Annex for existing guidance) it was necessary to have phased deliveries in 2018-19 to enable the vaccine to be available for this year's flu season. For 2018-19 the aTIV phased deliveries to all practices were on a schedule of: 40% being available in September, 20% in October and the final 40% in November. Because this phasing may be different to patients' past experiences of when vaccination can take place we are advising two key actions for all practices:

- GP practices are advised to actively encourage patients to receive the most effective vaccine available to their age group; including ensuring patients are booked into future clinics or appointments that are scheduled in line with planned deliveries
- If GP practices are experiencing any issues regarding supply of aTIV/Fluad, or have low stock, you should notify this to your nominated CCG co-ordinator **[ADD LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION HERE]**. They will be able to provide advice and guidance on whether vaccine is available locally at other GP surgeries or pharmacies.

Patients can be reassured that as flu usually becomes more common from December onwards; the remaining over 65s can receive their flu jab in November and still benefit from its protective effect.

Public Health England has published a leaflet that will support your communication with patients aged 65 years and over.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-for-people-aged-65-and-older>

We recognise that for some practices there will be an intensive period of work to undertake flu vaccination clinics, using the last phase of deliveries over the next few weeks. We thank GP practices and all NHS staff for their continued efforts and hard work to support this year's flu vaccination campaign.

Yours sincerely



Pauline Philip

National Urgent & Emergency Care
Director
NHS England

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Regional Director

Annex

NHS England and Public Health England recommend that it is generally better to wait to have the flu jab that is most effective for the relevant age group, even if that means having the jab slightly later in the year than in previous years. NHS England issued a Q&A about staged delivery to practices and pharmacies in March 2018 confirming this and advising them to begin plans for vaccination clinics to be organised based on this schedule.

Every GP practice that ordered before the stated April deadlines should have received their own delivery schedule in August 2018. Further guidance was issued in August¹ and September² 2018.

¹Letter and guidance for GPs and Community Pharmacies August 2018
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/flu-vaccination-programme-delivery-guidance-2018-19/>

²Local guidance for NHSE, CCGs, GPs and Community Pharmacies September 2018
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/local-actions-to-ensure-ativ-is-offered-to-individuals-aged-65-years-and-over/>