

INITIAL PREPARATIONS FOR SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINATION 2021

Information for GPs Please distribute this information to all doctors and staff in your practice

1. **Planning for the 2021 influenza vaccination season has commenced**
2. **Changes to the distribution of influenza vaccines planned - survey completion required**
3. **Storage and discarding of influenza vaccines advice**

Planning for 2021 Influenza season

- NSW Health distributed more than 3.1 m doses of influenza vaccine in the 2020 influenza season.
- NSW Health is actively preparing for the 2021 influenza vaccination program.
- Feedback from key stakeholders has identified a need to change vaccine distribution processes for the 2021 influenza season.
- There was unprecedented demand for influenza vaccination in the community for both private and government funded vaccine supplies.

Changes to the distribution of influenza vaccines in 2021

- In 2021, a vaccine pre-allocation system will replace the current vaccine pre-order system.
- Your first vaccine order will be pre-allocated based on your previous year's vaccine usage.
- You are now required to provide information regarding your current National Immunisation Program influenza vaccine stock.
- A survey was sent to you recently requesting completion of this information (please include in this survey any vaccines already discarded e.g cold chain breach).
- Influenza vaccines will not be released in 2021 to providers who fail to provide this information. If you have already completed this survey no further action is required.
- The deadline for survey completion has been extended until **11 December 2020**.

Storage of influenza vaccines

- Your 2020 influenza vaccines should not be discarded until they reach their expiry date OR if your local PHU has advised you to discard them due to a cold chain breach.
- A reminder that an expiry date of 12/2020 indicates that the vaccines can be used until 31 December 2020 (do not discard before this date).
- Now is the time to review your storage capacity for your 2021 influenza vaccines and determine whether your practice should purchase/hire additional storage.
- Do not overcrowd your vaccine refrigerator as this may result in temperature deviations and potentially cold chain breaches.
- Vaccines **MUST** be left in their original cardboard packaging when stored inside the refrigerator to protect them from light exposure and to ensure they remain potent.
- You will have the opportunity to review your pre-allocated order to ensure it meets your refrigerator storage capacity and estimated vaccine usage.
- Further information regarding these changes will be provided closer to the commencement of the 2021 influenza vaccination program.

Further Information

- NSW Health Immunisation website www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation