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To: Community Pharmacies - Wessex

8th October 2018

Email: england.wessexph@nhs.net

Dear Pharmacist

Telephone: 0113 824 9914

RE: Seasonal Flu Vaccination Programme

You will have received a number of updates to guidance regarding aTIV vaccine in recent weeks.

The purpose of this letter is to clarify and summarise the current position, setting out the actions that providers of the seasonal influenza programme should take to ensure patients over the age of 65 receive the recommended aTIV vaccine. Please note that a similar letter has been sent to all GP practices.

The key points from the guidance are:

- aTIV is the recommended vaccine for 65s and over. People 65 years and over should not be offered QIV other than in exceptional circumstances when all other avenues to obtain aTIV have been explored
- only when the accessible supply has been exhausted, and no further supplies are expected, is it clinically appropriate to offer QIV to 65s and over. In light of additional doses of aTIV being available to be ordered, it is unlikely this situation will now occur;
- the national guidance is clear that it is better for people to wait a few weeks to receive the recommended vaccine from the second phase of your delivery or the reserve stock rather than to receive one that is not recommended earlier in the season
- if QIV is offered to individuals who would derive greater benefit from aTIV, you must inform them at the time of gaining consent, that the vaccine is not one that is recommended for them and explain why it is being offered. The decision and their consent should be documented in the patient's notes.
- if an individual has received a flu vaccine different to the one recommended for their age group and that individual then wishes to receive the vaccine that they should have been given, it can be given following a discussion of the benefits and risks. PHE has recently issued guidance on actions to take when patients have been given the wrong vaccine inadvertently, which was sent to all practices earlier this week.

Our advice is that this guidance should also be followed where patients have been vaccinated without fully informed consent.

We are assured that there is sufficient stock nationally for all patients to receive the most appropriate vaccine for them. In light of this, there is no good reason for resorting to use of QIV at the present time.

If you have ordered insufficient aTIV vaccine, or have insufficient vaccine in stock currently, to meet demand from people aged 65 years, you are advised to:

- encourage them to return at a later date when you will have aTIV stock available
- check the availability of stock at local GP practices
- give them the option of attending another local pharmacy where there is aTIV available if they are not prepared to wait
- contact your NHS England local office team before resorting to use of QIV to ensure that every available option has been explored

If a GP practice has temporarily run out of aTIV, they are likewise being advised to ask patients to return for vaccination when stocks become available, or to signpost to local pharmacies that have stock available. A number of GP practices have under-ordered significantly.

We would therefore ask you to liaise regularly with your local GP practices over stock availability. It will help them to signpost if they know that you have stock available and when you next expect a delivery.

I would draw your attention to the PSNC guidance on inappropriate administration of QIV to patients 65 years and over which can be found at the link below

<https://psnc.org.uk/services-commissioning/psnc-briefings-services-and-commissioning/psnc-briefing-050-18-flu-vaccination-service-2018-19-adjuvanted-trivalent-inactivated-influenza-vaccine-ativ/>

I should like to thank you in advance for your co-operation in this difficult flu season and the contribution this will make to ensuring vulnerable patients receive the best possible protection from flu.

Yours sincerely



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Head of Public Health Commissioning

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