



## **2021 GOVERNMENT-FUNDED INFLUENZA IMMUNISATION PROGRAM INFORMATION FOR GENERAL PRACTICE**

**22 February 2021**

### **KEY MESSAGES**

- **Planning for 2021 government-funded influenza vaccine distribution is underway**
- **This year WA Health has partnered with WAPHA to implement a process to pre-allocate influenza vaccines for general practices across WA**
- **WAPHA is coordinating pre-allocation of influenza vaccine doses which will occur for the first six-week period of vaccine ordering**
- **It is WA Health's intent to commence distribution of influenza to providers in late March, pending confirmation of deliveries from manufactures to our warehouse**

### **Seasonal influenza vaccination in 2021**

Planning for the 2021 funded NIP influenza vaccination season is well underway.

Government-funded influenza vaccines will become available to General Practice when the vaccines are released for distribution by the manufacturers and the Australian Government.

The timing of the NIP influenza vaccine distribution may be different to the availability of privately purchased influenza vaccines.

There will be sufficient quantities of government-funded vaccine available for all persons who are eligible in WA.

WA Health will advise all providers when the expected delivery date is confirmed.

For GPs in metropolitan and regional WA, important changes to ordering government-funded seasonal influenza vaccines in 2021 are detailed below.

### **Changes to ordering and distribution of government-funded influenza vaccines in 2021**

#### **Pre-allocation of 2021 seasonal influenza vaccines for general practice**

To ensure all general practices have access to influenza vaccine during the first six weeks of distribution, WA Health have partnered with the [WA Primary Health Alliance](#) (WAPHA), in consultation with the RACGP, to pre-allocate seasonal influenza vaccine doses based on practice-level data on the size of the practices patient population and the number of doses available for distribution.

In the coming days, GPs will be contacted via email by WAPHA to be given the opportunity to review the number of doses pre-allocated to their practice to ensure it meets refrigerator storage capacity and estimated vaccine usage.

WAPHA is coordinating the pre-allocation process and will be the point of contact to discuss the number of doses of seasonal influenza vaccine pre-allocated to your practice. All enquiries relating to the pre-allocation of doses should be directed to Practice Assist phone toll-free 1800 2 ASSIST (1800 2 277 478) or email [practiceassist@wapha.org.au](mailto:practiceassist@wapha.org.au).

Each pre-allocation period will operate based on a delivery schedule and WA Health will advise providers when the commencement date for influenza vaccine delivery is confirmed. Access to additional NIP influenza doses during the six-week pre-allocation period will generally not be possible, unless vaccines are involved in a [cold chain breach](#). If a breach occurs, WA Health will arrange for distribution of replacement vaccines once approved by the Regional Immunisation Coordinator in your local [Public Health Unit](#).

To ensure the delivery of influenza vaccines runs smoothly in 2021, please reply to WAPHA's email/request as soon as possible. No further action will be required by your practice if you reply to the email sent by WAPHA.

**IMPORTANT:** Vaccination clinics should be scheduled after the vaccine doses have been received at your practice.

### After the pre-allocation period in 2021

Following the six-week pre-allocation period, general practices will be able to access further supply of 2021 seasonal influenza vaccines through the [WA Health online vaccine ordering system](#).

### Further important information

The WA Health Influenza web page and WA Immunisation Schedule will soon be updated to include 2021 influenza season information and links to the ATAGI 2021 influenza statement.

Now is the time for clinics to review their storage capacity for 2021 influenza vaccines and determine if additional storage needs to be arranged. In line with the [National Vaccine Storage Guidelines 'Strive for 5'](#) vaccines should be kept in their original packaging to protect them from light and temperature changes.

Subject to TGA approval of the COVID-19 vaccine and accessibility by GPs, it will be important for practices to keep in mind that when assessing vaccine fridge capacity, they may need to also consider storage space for the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as the flu vaccine. Further information regarding COVID-19 vaccine distribution will be made available as soon as available.

All immunisation providers should apply to have access to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). Mandatory reporting of all vaccines to the AIR will be effective from 1 July 2021. Those providers currently utilising the Authentication file to access the AIR, should apply for PRODA access as soon as possible. The Authentication file method of access will be disabled during 2021 (no date has been provided at this time).

[ATAGI advice on the relative timing of administering influenza and COVID-19 vaccines in 2021](#) has been released.

The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) will soon develop a factsheet for 2021, which responds to frequently asked questions about influenza vaccine.

WA Health will contact you with further updates as more information becomes available.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to protecting Western Australians from influenza.

We look forward to continuing to work with WAPHA, RACGP, and your practice to improve NIP influenza vaccine distribution in WA in 2021 and beyond.

Yours sincerely



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