

Thursday 10 October 2019

Victorian adolescents able to access vaccination by pharmacists

Trained pharmacists will be able to administer the influenza vaccination to people aged 10 years and above.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) welcomes today's announcement from the Victorian Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, the Hon Jenny Mikakos to lower the minimum vaccination age from 16 years to 10 years for pharmacist-vaccination in readiness for the 2020 influenza season.

PSA Victorian Branch president Ben Marchant commended the government's decision to allow pharmacists to protect more Victorians from influenza.

'Allowing trained pharmacists to administer vaccines to a wider cohort will significantly increase immunisation rates within the community'

'This is particularly important given a total of 61,545 cases of laboratory confirmed influenza have been processed in Victoria so far in 2019¹' Mr Marchant said. "Research has shown internationally and locally that pharmacists are considered highly accessible.'

'87% of Victorians live within 2.5km of a pharmacy, which are generally open longer hours than other primary health services. This change will enable more people, including families, to access influenza vaccination, and build immunity within the Victorian community.'

The administration of vaccines by pharmacists complements the excellent work done by GPs, nurses, indigenous health workers and other immunisers.

PSA commends the Victorian government for making use of the pharmacists' expertise and training to better protect the community against vaccine preventable diseases.

PSA continues to advocate for a national approach to pharmacist administered vaccinations to reduce confusion, ensure better access for patients to quality vaccination services and utilise the pharmacist workforce appropriately.

PSA encourages the Victorian government to continue working towards harmonising requirements for pharmacist- vaccination with other states in line with last year's resolution Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Health Council², and also to better align training and regulatory requirements of with other health professions.

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¹ Report No. 21: Week ending 29 September 2019, Victorian Sentinel Practice Influenza Network, Victorian State Government, at <https://www.vidri.org.au/app/uploads/2019/10/2019-VicSPIN-report-21.pdf>

² COAG Health Council Communique, 12 October 2019, at <https://www.coaghealthcouncil.gov.au/Portals/0/CHC%20Communique%20121018.pdf>