

24 February 2023

Dr Diana Sarfati
Director-General of Health
Manatū Hauora Ministry of Health
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Tēnā koe Dr Sarfati,

For your approval: The 2023 Annual Influenza Immunisation Programme

The National Immunisation Programme (the Programme) is responsible for implementing the Influenza Immunisation Programme which runs from 1 April to 30 September every year.

The Programme seeks your approval for the 2023 Influenza Immunisation season which is an “approved immunisation programme” as the influenza vaccines are subject to change due to circulating strains

An “approved immunisation programme” is defined in the Medicines Regulations 1984 and requires approval by the Director-General of a Medical Officer of Health. Approval means that a prescription is not required for funded and privately purchased vaccines under regulation 44A and dispensation occurs under regulation 44(o) of the Medicines Regulations 1984.

Influenza vaccines and eligibility

Pharmac are responsible for securing the influenza vaccine and setting eligibility criteria for the funded vaccines. The eligibility criteria are subject to change each season and last year eligibility was expanded to include additional population groups during the season. The Programme has been working with Pharmac to maintain the extended 2022 eligibility criteria for the 2023 season. This decision is expected no later than the week commencing 6 March 2023.

The vaccines are consented under the Medicines Act 1981 and as at 23 February 2023, four vaccines have been given full consent under section 20 of the Act:

- Afluria Quad is indicated for use in persons aged three years and older.
- Afluria Quad Junior is indicated for use in persons aged six months to 35 months inclusive.
- Fluad Quad is indicated for use in persons 65 years of age and older.
- FluQuadri is indicated for use in persons aged six months and older.

Afluria Quad and Afluria Quad Junior will be funded for those who meet Pharmac’s eligibility criteria and are also available to be privately purchased for people over six months of age who are not eligible for a funded influenza vaccine. Fluad Quad and FluQuadri will be available for private purchase only.

Goals for the 2023 Influenza Immunisation Programme

Every year, goals are set for the influenza immunisation season. In addition to the goals, the National Immunisation Programme and providers continue to prioritise health consumers who are

eligible for a funded influenza vaccine, such as hapū māmā and those with addiction and serious mental health conditions.

The Influenza Immunisation Programme goals for 2023 are to:

- achieve 75 percent influenza immunisation coverage for all people aged 65 years and over
- achieve 75 percent influenza immunisation coverage for Māori and Pacific people aged 55 and over¹
- eliminate the equity gap for all eligible Māori and Pacific people
- achieve 80 percent influenza immunisation coverage for the district employed health workforce
- increase the total number of non-district employed health and disability workers vaccinated against influenza.

Next steps

The Programme requests your approval of the 2023 Annual Influenza Programme as an “approved immunisation programme” under Medicines Regulations 1984. To confirm your approval, please counter sign this letter and return to Bex Bruno, Programme Manager, Immunisation team by email rebecca.bruno@health.govt.nz. If you have any queries, please feel free to contact Bex by email or phone +64 21 024 48478.

Ngā mihi,



Astrid Koornneef
Interim Director, Prevention
National Public Health Service

Date: 24 February 2023



Dr Diana Sarfati
Director-General of Health
Te Tumu Whakarae mō te Hauora

Date: 1 March 2023

¹ Pharmac have communicated they will announce the 2023 influenza eligibility criteria no later than the week commencing March 6, 2023. They have advised it is likely that eligibility will include Māori and Pacific people aged 55 – 64 years. In anticipation of the announcement, the programme are including this group as part of the goals for the 2023 influenza season.