



Australian Government

Department of Health

Acting Chief Medical Officer

Preparations for the 2021 Influenza Season

Dear Colleagues

I am writing to encourage your members to consider their influenza vaccine requirements and commence preparations for the 2021 influenza season.

The Australian Government is a strong supporter of immunisation in that it is a safe and effective way to prevent the spread of vaccine preventable diseases such as influenza and its complications.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to an unprecedented level of demand for influenza vaccines in 2020 across all vaccine channels including GPs, pharmacies and other immunisation providers.

A record number of seasonal influenza vaccines were made available for the Australian market in 2020, with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) releasing over 17.6 million doses. This is up from 13.2 million doses in 2019 and 11 million doses in 2018.

Strong demand for seasonal influenza vaccines was observed early in the 2020 season and remained consistent. Influenza vaccination will be more important than ever given the ongoing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is anticipated that demand for influenza vaccines will remain high next year.

Whilst supply of the Australian Government funded National Immunisation Program (NIP) influenza vaccines is secure, the impact of the increased demand was felt across the private market in 2020.

Noting the demand experienced this year, now is the time to consider your private market ordering requirements for next year. State and Territory Departments of Health will be in contact with you through their usual channels to facilitate ordering and distribution of NIP vaccines and as such, no further action is required regarding these vaccines at this time.

Please share this information within your members to ensure private market influenza vaccine supplies are adequate for the 2021 season.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping tail.

Professor Paul Kelly
Acting Chief Medical Officer
30 September 2020