

Mr George McNeice

Chief Executive

Irish Medical Organisation

10 Fitzwilliam Place

Dublin 2

21 October 2011

Dear Mr McNeice,

I note the letter sent to me by Mr Eric Young, dated 20 October 2011, on behalf of the IMO, following our meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

The position of the PSI in relation to the provision of seasonal influenza vaccination services by pharmacists has been articulated to the IMO through the formal guidance issued by the PSI following the introduction of the new regulations (S.I. 525 of 2011).

There is an extensive network of pharmacy cover available throughout the country on a 365 day basis, including late-night pharmacy services in many areas.

Patients requiring emergency care and treatment for any or every reason have access to such services through the Emergency Departments of hospitals, local medical co-op units, emergency rooms of acute hospitals and other facilities, including those provided by the VHI.

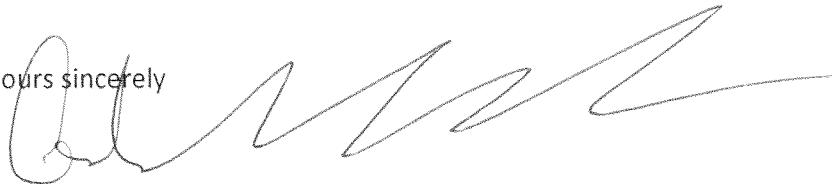
Minor complications arising post-vaccination should be competently and confidently addressed by pharmacists, and patients requiring additional care and treatment will be appropriately referred, as necessary and in the exercise of the pharmacist's professional judgement. The regulations and the PSI's guidance deal specifically with the issues around the management and treatment of anaphylactic shock arising as a result of the administration of the vaccine.

The regulations and guidance also deal with circumstances where a patient provides the pharmacist administering the vaccine with the name and contact particulars of their GP.

Pharmacists are highly trained professionals who practise autonomously and who are subject to a robust regulatory framework, including a statutory Code of Conduct and the guidance of their regulator.

Legal and ethical issues may arise where pharmacists seek to have contractual arrangements with medical practitioners for the provision of particular services. Patients make their own choices of doctor and pharmacist, within the relevant legislative, ethical and contractual obligations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ambrose McLoughlin', written in a cursive style.

Dr Ambrose McLoughlin

Registrar and CEO