Template email to MP

Dear xx

Urgent Support Needed for Community Pharmacies and their Patients: NHS flu vaccinations

Community pharmacies in England and their patients require an urgent intervention with regard to the start date of the NHS flu vaccination programmeand we are seeking your help to write to Ministers about this. This issue will affect all pharmacies who are offering the vaccination service in [insert location] and could have an impact on local vaccination rates and services.

We believe the timely vaccination of around one million people nationally in September is at stake, including many in [insert location] where local pharmacies have been busy preparing for the service in good faith. We are also worried about the ability of local pharmacies to manage workload this winter (which we anticipate may include implementing the Common Conditions Service which is currently being negotiated as part of the NHS Access Recovery Plan), to ensure maximum vaccination rates, and to recoup the investment they have made sourcing vaccines in good faith.

The issue has come about because NHS England has announced that the flu vaccination service may not now commence until October, pending advice from the JCVI. This is unlike all previous years in which it has started on September 1st and pharmacies have been planning on that basis. A late start to the service could lead to confused and angry patients; possible reduced vaccination rates; huge operational issues for pharmacies; and additional pressures on pharmacies over winter, at a time when pressures across the NHS are likely to be extreme.

This is yet another pressure on community pharmacies who are continuing to face extreme financial and operational challenges and urgently need further investment and support.

**We are calling for the flu vaccination service to start as normal this year on 1st September with any JCVI advice to instead be considered for the 2024/25 season.**

We have attached a briefing produced nationally by Community Pharmacy England which gives some more information about this and we would very much appreciate your support in raising this matter with Ministers.

Yours

xx