

21 November 2005

*Wellington House  
Room 510  
133-155 Waterloo Rd  
London  
SE1 8UG*

Dear Colleague

### **Supplies of seasonal influenza vaccine**

Further to my letter of 3 November 2005 I am writing to update you with the current situation concerning supplies of seasonal influenza vaccine.

In line with previous years, the Department of Health met with manufacturers to ensure enough vaccine was available for the 11 million people in the groups recommended to have the vaccine (as outlined in CMO letter of 25 July). In fact, a record 14 million doses are available this year - far in excess of what was required.

Many surgeries are now at the peak of their annual influenza immunisation campaigns. We have received feedback requesting supplies of influenza vaccine over and above the stocks they ordered from suppliers in the usual way to meet the needs of their campaign. From the audit that we have undertaken, there is some concern that the vaccine may have been used on the 'worried well' rather than the pre-agreed risk groups and that this has contributed to the shortfall.

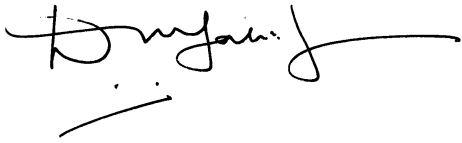
The vaccine manufacturers have informed DH that there are still pre-ordered doses of vaccine scheduled for delivery throughout this month and into December. The Department of Health is stepping in to try to ease the pressure by issuing stock from its contingency reserve, but we expect that this stock of 400,000 doses will soon be exhausted. We have been able to secure a further contingency stock of 200,000 doses that will be delivered in late January, and the Department is working with manufacturers to try to secure additional vaccine. However this is against an increased international demand for seasonal flu so we may not be successful.

I ask you please therefore

- Not to over-order vaccine
- To ensure that all remaining vaccine is used to vaccinate only people aged 65 and over and those in clinical risk groups as defined in the CMO letter dated 25 July 2005

- If you do have vaccine over and above that needed to immunise these groups of people, please inform your influenza immunisation co-ordinator **or the Department of Health** (contact: Jeff Porter at [jeff.porter@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:jeff.porter@dh.gsi.gov.uk)) so that these stocks can be diverted to practices who need additional supplies to vaccinate risk groups.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Salisbury', with a horizontal line underneath.

Dr DAVID SALISBURY CB, FRCP, FRCPH, FFPH  
Head of Immunisation

This document has been authorised by the Department of Health: **Gateway reference no: 5838**