

Better access to flu vaccine welcomed

22 April 2024

National Seniors Australia (NSA) has welcomed the Federal Government's funding of pharmacists to provide flu and other National Immunisation Program (NIP) vaccines in residential aged care facilities.

"Allowing pharmacists to give aged care residents protection against COVID-19 and influenza from April 29 is a good move on the cusp of the flu season," NSA Chief Executive Officer Mr Chris Grice said.

"While the flu vaccine has been available for people 65+ at no charge in GP clinics for some time, and at pharmacies, this is the first time the vaccine will be accessible to people in residential care via their pharmacist.

"GPs can be stretched visiting residential care facilities and many residents in care are not able to visit their GP. The ability for these residents to receive the vaccine in the convenience of their care facility, via a pharmacist, in addition to a GP, will help to ensure our most vulnerable Australians get the protection they need when they need it."

Mr Grice said rightly so, a lot of focus the past few years has been on COVID-19 and its vaccine, but it's important to remember there are other serious infections, influenza being just one of them.

"The flu can be very serious, especially for older Australians who may have complex health conditions and compromised immune systems. Vaccination is the most effective way to protect against contracting the flu and NSA welcomes government measures to make access to vaccination easier," he said.

The flu vaccine is free under the National Immunisation Program for several groups of people, including Australians 65 and older.

People who are not eligible for a free vaccine can purchase the vaccine from vaccination providers, including local GPs and many pharmacies.

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