



Jillian Skinner
Minister for Health

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 2 July 2015

COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS NOW VACCINATING AGAINST INFLUENZA

Health Minister Jillian Skinner today became one of the first people in NSW to receive a flu vaccine from a community pharmacist under new rules introduced by the NSW Government.

Mrs Skinner urged others who have not been vaccinated against influenza to do so now, either through a community pharmacist or general practitioner.

In March the NSW Government amended the *NSW Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008* to allow pharmacists to administer influenza vaccines to people aged over 18.

NSW Health worked closely with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia (NSW) and other peak bodies to create NSW Pharmacist Vaccination Standards, which came into effect last month.

The standards prescribe how pharmacists are trained to administer the vaccine, the physical environment in which vaccination must take place, how vaccination records are reported and management of adverse medical reactions during vaccination.

"I am very proud of this initiative by the NSW Government. It's safe, convenient, and increases access to influenza vaccination, particularly in rural and remote areas where easy access to a general practitioner can be limited," Mrs Skinner said.

"Improving access to the influenza vaccine should increase health outcomes across the community and reduce the burden on NSW hospitals during the peak winter period."

Prior to the introduction of the new regulations, most vaccines have been administered by doctors or trained nurses, requiring people to access a GP practice or community health centre.

As most pharmacies are conveniently located in shopping districts, it is hoped the rate of influenza vaccination among adults will rise.

Since August last year, the Pharmacy Guild has trained 175 pharmacists, with

numbers expected to increase significantly in the lead up to the 2016 winter flu season.

NSW Health Director of Health Protection Dr Jeremy McAnulty said the new standards ensure pharmacies are now a safe and convenient vaccination option for healthy adults.

“The standards are comprehensive and will ensure pharmacists who choose to administer influenza vaccines will do so safely and effectively,” Dr McAnulty said.

“The standards also require pharmacists to send patients’ records of vaccination back to their nominated GP so that records are kept up to date.”

Mrs Skinner received her influenza vaccine from pharmacist Ziad Bazzi at Brunskill’s Pharmacy in Mosman, in her electorate of North Shore.

“It is not too late to vaccinate against influenza this winter,” Mrs Skinner said.

“I would encourage those who have not yet been vaccinated to do so now, as the vaccine takes full effect two weeks after it is administered.”

Adult influenza vaccinations administered in community pharmacies are user pays. The consumer will be charged the cost of the vaccine plus a service charge by the pharmacist.

Free influenza vaccines are available from general practitioners and Aboriginal Medical Services for certain people under the National Immunisation Program.

Those eligible for free vaccines include people aged 65 and older, pregnant women, people with chronic illness and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.