



8 April 2021

Dear colleagues,

You may be aware that tonight the Prime Minister, Health Minister and Australian Chief Medical Officer have announced changes to the rollout of the COVID vaccination program following advice from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI). This is following a small number of unusual thrombosis cases following the AstraZeneca vaccine.

We are expecting more information over the coming days with the [ATAGI statement](#) detailing that for people under the age of 50, the preferred COVID-19 vaccine is Pfizer (Comirnaty) over AstraZeneca.

ATAGI notes that AstraZeneca can be used in adults aged under 50 years where the benefits outweigh the risks for that individual and the person has made an informed decision based on an understanding of the risks and benefits.

It is important to note that people who have had the first dose of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca without any serious adverse effects can be given the second dose, including adults under 50 years.

AstraZeneca Vaccination Clinic – temporary changes

Until we get further information, we will pause AstraZeneca vaccination for those under 50 years who have not already received the first dose of AstraZeneca - effective immediately. This will allow us to develop further detailed material (including the latest information) for adults under 50 in line with the ATAGI advice. **Our Metro North vaccination services will remain open as planned for adults aged 50 or more who wish to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine.**

I would like to re-iterate that AstraZeneca vaccine is highly effective at reducing the risk of death or severe disease from COVID-19 across all adult age groups. I acknowledge that this announcement is likely to impact on confidence in being vaccinated with AstraZeneca vaccine in all age groups. We will ensure that vaccination clinics tomorrow have additional resources and Subject Matter Experts available to answer any questions that people may have.

Pfizer Vaccination Clinic – important message

Our Pfizer (Comirnaty) vaccination clinic will continue to provide vaccinations to booked people tomorrow – primarily 1a. There is no capacity for new bookings tomorrow at this time.

In light of the ATAGI advice tonight, we will work quickly to review our vaccination program through the Pfizer clinic rapidly. This will include planning to provide priority access for 1b personnel under 50 years for which the Pfizer vaccine is preferred over the AstraZeneca. I acknowledge that for many aged under 50 years, this will delay your access to vaccination. I appreciate your patience while we work to develop a new plan.

It is important to us to provide safe, timely access to all eligible people who want to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

I will update you as more information is available.

Regards,

Dr Liz Rushbrook
Metro North Incident Controller