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**TO:
HEADS OF PROVINCIAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS
HEADS OF PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES
DISTRICT, HOSPITAL AND PHC MANAGERS
COVID-19 VACCINE PROGRAMME MANAGERS
COVID-19 VACCINATION SITE MANAGERS
COVID-19 VACCINATORS
COMMUNICATION UNIT**

NATIONAL VACCINATION PROGRAMME CIRCULAR 3 OF 2023

VACCINATION OF CHILDREN 5 – 11 YEARS OLD AT RISK OF SEVERE COVID DISEASE

1. As of 27th February 2023, children 5 – 11 years old at risk of severe COVID disease will be eligible to receive two doses of the Comirnaty paediatric Vaccine® given with a minimum interval of 21 days.
2. Children with chronic heart, respiratory, neurological, endocrine, kidney, liver, or gastrointestinal conditions, as well as immunosuppression (including asplenia or dysfunction on the spleen) and serious genetic abnormalities that affect a number of systems, will be eligible and should be offered vaccination. A more detailed list is contained in Annexure A.
3. The majority of eligible children will be attending health services on a regular basis. COVID-19 vaccination for children will be introduced in a phased approach, broadly following the phases outlined below:

Phase I: Introduction in a limited number of central and tertiary hospitals in each province

Phase II: Expansion to all tertiary and regional hospitals

Phase III: Expansion to sufficient hospitals to ensure that there is a least one site per district.

Phase IV: Expansion to Primary Health Care facilities – in most cases, through outreach from existing sites.

4. Any facility providing vaccination must be registered as a vaccination site on the Master Facility List (MFL). The facility may be a primary vaccination or outreach site. All sites storing vaccines require Section 22A(15) permits.
5. Consent from the child's parent, guardian or caregiver is required for vaccination. This consent must be obtained at the vaccination site, which is responsible for storing the consent form as part of the child's patient record in line with standard practices.
6. COVID-19 vaccination for children 5 to 11 years will initially be provided only in the public sector, with the expectation that provision will be made for both insured and uninsured children to access the service. Re-imbursment mechanisms for COVID-19 vaccinations administered in the private sector are currently being reviewed, and the provision of vaccination for children 5 – 11 years old will be included in future reimbursement processes.
7. The Comirnaty paediatric vaccine® will be distributed (from Biovac) using the current COVID-19 vaccine distribution model. The minimum order quantity is 10 vials per shipper; therefore, the minimum order quantity is 10 vials per site.
8. The EVDS is currently being updated to accommodate recording of these doses. However, this functionality will not be available until April 2023. In the interim, vaccinations should be recorded on paper using the attached forms.
9. Vaccinations must be administered in line with the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Vaccination of Children 5 – 11 years. The SOP as well as additional training, will be available on the National Department of Health's Knowledge Hub (www.knowledgehub.org.za).

Kind regards



DR NG CRISP
ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL: HEALTH
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