

COVID-19 VACCINE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION WEEKLY REPORT

Week ending:	18 December 2020	Priority:	Routine
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	2021-1879

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern Prime Minister	Note the contents of this Weekly Report	N/A
Hon Grant Robertson Minister of Finance		
Hon Dr Megan Woods Minister of Research, Science and Innovation		
Hon Chris Hipkins Minister for COVID-19 Response		
Hon Nanaia Mahuta Minister of Foreign Affairs		
Hon Andrew Little Minister of Health		



Simon Rae
Manager of International Science Partnerships
 Labour Science & Enterprise, MBIE
 18 /12 /2020



Maree Roberts
**Deputy Director-General, Systems Strategy
and Policy**
 18 / 12 / 2020

Minister's comments:



IN CONFIDENCE

COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy Implementation

Weekly Report

Week Ending 18 December 2020

Purpose

This weekly joint report updates Ministers on key developments in the implementation of the COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy.

Workstreams

Advance Purchase Agreements

Contact: Poppy Haynes

Phone: 9(2)(a)

This week joint Ministers approved the purchase of 5.36 million courses of Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine candidate. This candidate adds a new technology platform to our portfolio. Definitive agreements with both Novavax and AstraZeneca were fully executed (signed by all parties) on 15 December. 9(2)(ba)(i) & (ii)

Ministers announced the Novavax and Astrazeneca purchases on 17 December, as part of a wider vaccine announcement. The Pfizer and Janssen deals had been previously announced. Negotiations have now concluded with Pfizer and Janssen on the final, legally binding APA contracts ('definitive agreements'), which follow and supersede the heads of terms.

Advice is being prepared for Ministers on these latest concluded negotiations, due by Monday 21 December. It is important we receive approval from Ministers to execute the definitive agreements this year, 9(2)(ba)(i) & (ii), and because our current in-principle agreement with Janssen is not legally binding. Once the House returns in the new year, statements will need to be presented to the House noting that the Minister of Finance has granted indemnities for Novavax and AstraZeneca.

Indemnities

The Treasury will provide the Minister of Finance with two reports on Friday seeking agreement to the indemnities included in the Janssen and Pfizer definitive agreements.

Immunisation Strategy and Programme

Contact: Mathew Parr

Phone: 9(2)(a)

DHB Engagement

A formal letter of engagement was shared with DHBs on 16 December in anticipation of the vaccine announcements on 17 December. It formalises our collaboration process which will continue next year and is accompanied by a comprehensive pack of information about the COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunisation Programme that details the work which is being progressed across delivery pillars. It sets the tone for a strong nationally led and overseen immunisation campaign that will be locally coordinated and delivered.

In the letter we have requested that DHBs provide information about plans to roll out an immunisation campaign, including ensuring we have a dedicated employed and trained workforce. We are commencing a structured programme of engagement which will include a series of webinar sessions and opportunities for

DHBs to provide feedback on our national planning assumptions.

We will closely monitor the development to the approach to ensure a strong equity focus is applied throughout. We expect to provide a full overview of DHB plans by the end of January.

Decision to Use

Work is progressing on the Decision to Use Framework that will guide decision makers when determining whether to use a vaccine within the portfolio.

Te Tiriti considerations and equity will be at the core of the Decision to Use Framework and it will also consider principles such as equity, wellbeing, value and regional responsibility. Further information will be shared with Ministers in the New Year.

The Decision to Use Framework will be developed in early 2021 and will be the focus of the Cabinet paper report back to Ministers. The Cabinet paper in early 2021 will also include updates on the Sequencing Framework, eligibility to receive a COVID-19 vaccine and clarifications on the scope of “free” vaccination.

National Immunisation Solution

The first release of the new COVID-19 National Immunisation Solution has been completed on schedule for 1 January 2021. Work will continue on the solution with a target of 1 March 2021 to support first delivery of the vaccine, with support and change processes in place.

Science Advice

Contact: Chriselle Braganza

The Science & Clinical Review Panel has reviewed the recently published Phase 3 trial data for the Pfizer candidate to ensure that the scientific assessments informing Ministerial decisions on purchase agreements reflect the latest available information.

In parallel, the panel has updated summaries of the four bilateral APA candidates to inform wider programme decision-making, support science communications, and facilitate international Taskforce collaborations with like-minded countries. These summaries were provided to Minister Verrall’s office for use by advisors to inform on technical details relating to the candidates.

MBIE and MoH have initiated discussions about transitioning science advice on vaccines, from advice on purchase decisions to advice on vaccines use decisions.

Joint update from MBIE and MoH Communications

Contact: Karl Ferguson (MBIE)

Carl Billington (MoH)

Communications planning

Our focus this week has been on finalising arrangements and communications collateral for Vaccine Day on 17 December, which included additional vaccine purchasing announcements. Along with the announcement, we have also published on the Covid-19 website and social media channels a short, animated video to explain the Vaccine Strategy. The video has been translated into a wide range of languages. We have also published a series of social media posts via MOH channels to support the announcement and ensure a wide audience – particularly harder to reach communities – hear the vaccine updates directly from trusted channels.

A “Vaccine Update” video has also been produced for staff to ensure they’re updated and informed on progress.

As part of the implementation of our communications strategy – ‘Towards a COVID-19 free New Zealand, together’ – MOH have commissioned Clemengers advertising agency, via the AoG contract arrangement, to develop a public information campaign. This campaign, which will precede a wider immunisation campaign, is designed to provide information and assurances on vaccine safety, and to provide updates on New Zealand’s vaccine ‘readiness.’ The campaign is scheduled to begin early in 2021.

Stakeholder engagement

‘Covid commentators’ (Michael Baker, Siouxsie Wiles etc) were briefed last week on progress to secure the vaccine portfolio; immunisation planning, timeframes and sequencing; and the Medsafe approval process.

Our proactive stakeholder engagement programme will begin again early in 2021.

Media management

We continue to field a range of media queries, and we are working with other Taskforce agencies to coordinate and align responses.

Upcoming Briefings

Due Date	Briefing Number	Title	Sign Out Manager
18 Dec	2021-1847	Supply Agreement for purchase of COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer Inc	Peter Crabtree
18 Dec	2021-1849	Supply Agreement for purchase of COVID-19 vaccines from Janssen Pharmaceutica NV	Peter Crabtree

Ministerial Official Information Act Requests

Number	Due to MO	Due to Requestor	Requestor	Request	Status	Sign out
OIA20-131	11 Jan 2021	18 Jan 2021	9(2)	Copies of any briefings the Minister has received from Government Departments (except for Briefings to Incoming Ministers, which I understand are being proactively released) between 6 November 2020 and 13 November 2020 under the Official Information Act.	Drafting	Poppy Haynes