

30 November 2021

Dear PHO Chief Executive Officers

COVID-19 Immunisation Services through General Practice

On [20 April 2021](#) Joanne Gibbs and I wrote to you outlining the funding rates and requirements for the BioNTech/Pfizer (Pfizer) COVID-19 vaccine. Since then the Government has also made a third primary dose of the Pfizer vaccine available for severely immunocompromised people, which was communicated on [3 November 2021](#).

The Government has announced:

- a booster dose of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine will be made available to consumers who received their final primary dose greater than six months ago
- the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine is available as an option to the Pfizer vaccine
- medical exemptions for COVID-19 vaccinations.

Booster Vaccines

From 29 November 2021, consumers aged 18 and over will be able to book a booster vaccine. There must be a gap of 180 days (six months) between their last primary dose and when the booster is administered. Although Pfizer will be the primary booster vaccine, AstraZeneca boosters are also available. The Price Per Dose (PPD) for boosters will be the same for the primary doses. Further information on boosters is on the Ministry of Health's [website](#).

AstraZeneca Vaccines

The Government's COVID-9 Vaccine Implementation Programme will continue to use the Pfizer vaccine as its primary vaccine, and as such will only make the AstraZeneca vaccine available at a limited number of sites.

The AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine will be provided as an alternative to the Pfizer vaccine for people who are:

- unable to be vaccinated with the Pfizer vaccine, especially those who are required to be vaccinated by the Vaccination Order or their employer; or
- those hesitant to take an mRNA vaccine.

Consumers may seek consultation services from General Practitioners or Nurse Practitioners to gain advice regarding the suitability of the AstraZeneca vaccine for them. Should they wish to receive the vaccine, they will book themselves into a clinic offering this vaccination option using Book My Vaccine, or ringing Healthline.

AstraZeneca is approved by Medsafe as a two-dose course, and as such does not require a prescription.

If, however a consumer has become hesitant to receive a second primary dose of the Pfizer vaccine or a booster dose of the Pfizer vaccine, and wishes to receive a dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine as a substitute, this will require a prescription to reflect its "off-label" use as well as a written consent form.

All consultations regarding the suitability of AstraZeneca will be subsidised at \$60. It is believed that this level of remuneration is commensurate with the effort required to deliver the services.

The claiming conditions for this service requires there is:

- no charge/patient co-payment for this service, including issuing a prescription if required
- no claim for a GMS clawback
- no simultaneous claim against any other funding stream for this service.

All guidance issued by the Ministry of Health must be followed, including where required obtaining a signed consent form.

Medical Exemptions

In some situations, health and disability, education and corrections workers may be able to get an exemption from being vaccinated against COVID-19. However, there are very few situations where vaccination is contraindicated and, as such, a medical exemption is expected to be rarely required.

Exemptions will be limited to situations where a suitable alternative to the COVID-19 vaccine is not readily available for the individual.

Exemptions will be for a specified time, reflecting, for example, recovery from clinical conditions or the availability of alternate vaccines.

It is likely that most people who are not medically exempt can be safely vaccinated, with some requiring extra precautions.

If a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) believes that its service will be significantly disrupted if the affected worker/s are unable to provide part, or all the service, the employer can apply for a temporary significant service disruption exemption. This is for a specific health or disability worker who is not vaccinated and where removing them from the role would result in a significant disruption to the service. An exemption should only be sought after all other business continuity options have been considered by the PCBU.

A member of the public cannot apply for an exemption for themselves. If the Order applies to the person and they are not vaccinated and think they might be eligible for a temporary medical exemption, their usual medical practitioner or nurse practitioner can apply on their behalf.

The application may only be on the grounds that the person meets the specified exemption criteria. The application is submitted to the temporary medical exemptions panel run by the Ministry of Health. The Temporary Medical Exemptions panel includes medical and nurse practitioners and a Māori health leader. The panel will consult with external experts if required.

More information on medical exemptions can be found on the Ministry of Health's [website](#).

The Ministry and DHBs acknowledge that more paperwork will be required for medical exemptions, in comparison with other COVID-19 consultations. All medical exemptions that can be submitted without a patient examination will be funded at \$60. All medical exemptions that require a patient examination will be funded at \$120.

Payment Schedule

The PPD for all COVID-19 vaccination events have been aligned to the original pricing framework and requirements undertaken to support the implementing the Pfizer vaccine. The PPD rates will be reviewed by 28 February 2022.

The fees associated with these COVID-19 vaccination events are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Payment Schedule (excluding GST)

Event	Price Per Dose Fee (\$)		Consultation Fee (\$)	
	Standard Hours	Out of Hours	Standard	Complex
Pfizer Booster	36.05	48.72	-	-
AstraZeneca Booster	36.05	48.72	60	
AstraZeneca 1 st and 2 nd Primary Dose	36.05	48.72	60	-

Event	Price Per Dose Fee (\$)		Consultation Fee (\$)	
	Standard Hours	Out of Hours	Standard (No Patient Exam)	Complex (Patient Exam)
Medical Exemption	-	-	60	120

If you have any questions, please contact your local DHB portfolio manager.

Yours sincerely



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cc: GMs Planning and Funding, All DHBs
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