**DIS-CHEM CONFIRMS READINESS FOR COVID-19 VACCINATION ROLL-OUT**

Dis-Chem Pharmacies has confirmed its readiness for dedicated Covid-19 vaccination roll-out.

“We are well-positioned to commence with the vaccination roll-out aligned to government timelines, and we have prepared our teams to work at full capacity if supply from government is consistent,” says CEO Ivan Saltzman.

Dis-Chem has so far secured 32 dedicated vaccination sites situated nationwide at key locations, 11 of which will be ready to commence vaccinations in the week of 24 May.  These dedicated sites will be able to administer an average of 600 vaccinations per day, and this can be extended with the addition of Dis-Chem’s in-store clinics, with each store capable of administering up to 50 shots daily.  Should government stock be readily available, the group will be able to vaccinate approximately 800,000 people each month.

Dis-Chem has negotiated with landlords to utilise empty premises in centres where the group has a retail pharmacy presence.  Each site has been fully equipped with all the required fixtures including refrigeration units, technology and emergency equipment to ensure a thorough and complete vaccine process.

Qualified vaccinators will be on call, all of whom have undergone full Department of Health knowledge hub vaccination training, including updated training modules on both the Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. Pfizer stock has been allocated to Dis-Chem as the group has the necessary infrastructure to manage its extreme handling conditions. The vaccinators will be supported by a team of volunteers to regulate the flow of patients and manage the stringent administrative requirements.

Dis-Chem’s vaccine roll-out will be linked to government’s Electronic Vaccination Data System (EVDS) which enables electronic registration, co-ordinates accredited vaccination sites and supply of vaccines, enables a pre-booking and vaccination system, and records who is and isn’t vaccinated, as well as any information that will help the department with planning, execution and monitoring of the vaccination.  Because the Pfizer vaccine requires two doses, Dis-Chem will have a two-week advance view on bookings to ensure that the second dosage is administered timeously.

“From the start of the pandemic we put up our hands to assist government via testing stations and our commitment to partnering with government to fight this pandemic remains steadfast. The vaccination roll-out provides us with another opportunity to continue to play a role in supporting the Dept of Health via its roll-out programme while continuing to serve our community,” Saltzman says.

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