ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND

Dr Tony Holohan
Chief Medical Officer
Department of Health
Block 1, Miesian Plaza
50 – 58, Lower Baggot Street
D02 XW14

27 January 2022

cc Dr Colette Bonner DCMO
Dr Ronan Glynn DCMO
Dr Siobhán O'Sullivan Chief Bioethicist
Ms Pauline Brady CMO Office

Re: Recommendations for Nuvaxovid COVID-19 vaccine (Novavax)

Dear Dr Holohan,

I am writing to you regarding the issue above.

The European Medicines Agency recommended granting a conditional marketing authorisation for the first protein sub unit COVID-19 vaccine on 20 December 2021. Nuvaxovid, manufactured by Novavax, is authorised as a two dose primary course, three weeks apart, for those aged 18 and older.

mRNA vaccines remain the preferred choice for primary and booster vaccines because of the extensive safety data, and effectiveness against Omicron.

Nuvaxovid is a welcome addition to the available authorised vaccines. NIAC recommends that a primary course of Nuvaxovid may be offered to those aged 18 years and over with a contraindication to an mRNA vaccine, or who have chosen not to receive another COVID-19 vaccine course. Nuvaxovid can be given in homologous or heterologous schedules for the groups above. Administration in pregnancy can be considered when the benefits of vaccination outweigh the potential risks to the mother or the fetus, or when an mRNA vaccine is contraindicated or declined.

Nuvaxovid has been shown to boost SARS CoV-2 antibody responses following primary vaccination with either Vaxzevria or Comirnaty although the magnitude of the antibody response is less than that following boosting with an mRNA vaccine. While boosting with an mRNA vaccine remains the preferred option, Nuvaxovid may be considered for those aged 18 years and over with a contraindication to an mRNA vaccine, or who have chosen not to receive another COVID-19 booster.

These recommendations reflect current evidence and will be reviewed when more information becomes available.

Yours sincerely,

Karina Butler

Imc 03054

Professor Karina Butler
Chair, NIAC