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Mr Jeremy Hanson MLA

Chair

Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

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Dear Mr Hanson

Thank you for the Scrutiny Report No. 10 of 2 November 2021 and the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety's (the Committee) comments on subordinate legislation *Disallowable Instruments* DI2021-205, Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods (Vaccinations by Pharmacists) Direction 2021 (No 2) (Direction No 2) and DI2021-207, Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods (Vaccinations by Pharmacists) Direction 2021 (No 3) (Direction No 3).

I thank the Committee for its consideration of these two Directions, and provide the following comments in relation to the matters on which the Committee has requested a response.

The Committee has sought advice as to the significance of two changes made to the Explanatory Statement for Direction No 3, compared with the Explanatory Statement for Direction No 2. In short, my advice is that neither of these changes is particularly significant.

Age limit for vaccination by pharmacists

The Committee noted the age stated in the explanatory statements for both instruments was amended from "12 years" in Direction No 2 to "10 years" in Direction No 3 for the following sentence:

The intent of establishing this age limit is to provide flexibility should a COVID vaccine be approved or provisionally approved for use in children younger than 10 years in the future.

I acknowledge the error made in the explanatory statement for Direction No 3, which should have remained "12 years". This minor error is not considered to have an impact on the purpose or effect of the instrument.

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Age limit for AstraZeneca

The Committee noted that the condition that restricted pharmacists and intern pharmacists from administering the COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine to people who are 50 years or older was omitted from the explanatory statement for the Direction No 3.

The Committee noted that the following paragraph in the explanatory statement for Direction No 2 is omitted from the explanatory statement for Direction No 3:

The condition which restricted pharmacists and intern pharmacists from administering the COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine to people who are 50 years of age or older is removed *in this version of the Vaccination Standards* [emphasis added]. By removing this condition, both pharmacists and intern pharmacists will be able to administer the AstraZeneca vaccine subject to requirements to follow ATAGI clinical guidance and obtain written informed consent outlined in Part B, section 1 of the Standards.

This was not included in the Explanatory Statement for Direction No 3 because the relevant clause had already been removed through Direction No 2. Therefore, the version of the Vaccination Standards in effect immediately prior to the notification of Direction No 3 did not include the condition restricting pharmacists and intern pharmacists from administering the COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine to people who are 50 years of age or older.

I hope this information addresses the Committee's comments.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA