

PRESS RELEASE

Full-service healthcare distributors deliver over one-third of a billion vaccine doses in 2021

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Brussels, Belgium – The European Healthcare Distribution Association (GIRP) and its members – who distribute over 15 billion packs of medicines and healthcare products each year to over 180,000 pharmacies and healthcare professionals dispensing medicines are **committed to ensuring an effective and efficient rollout of COVID-19 vaccines** to countries and communities across the EU.

Full-service healthcare distributors proved essential to meeting the EU vaccination targets, **distributing 344.75 million COVID-19 vaccines across the EU in 2021** – adding up to over 1/3 of all vaccines doses.

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, full-service healthcare distributors have proven their resilience and efficiency in ensuring continuous supply of medicines. Full-service healthcare distributors put in place successful contingency plans to respond to unprecedented levels of demand in a rapid manner. Government, customer, and patient confidence in the supply chain at community level was maintained and is stronger today than it ever was.

With Member States and the healthcare supply chain fully engaged in one of the most important immunisation efforts in living memory, full-service healthcare distributors have demonstrated their ability to adapt to the extraordinary requirements imposed by the unrolling of the new vaccines. As vaccines rollout debuted in March last year, **full-service healthcare distributors, handling 100% of COVID-19 vaccines distribution across 9 Member States, and playing a crucial role in vaccines deployment in 9 other EU countries to communities through vaccination centres, hospitals, general practitioners, and pharmacies** – adding to a total of salient involvement of full-service healthcare distributors in 18 Member States.

GIRP President Bernd Grabner reflects, “As EU Member States began mapping out their COVID-19 vaccines distribution schemes, the robust experience, expertise, flexibility and strength of our sector proved full-service healthcare distributors are crucial partners in the swift and effective deployment of vaccines within the EU Member States.” With more and more vaccines continuing to be developed and authorised and COVID-19 booster shots being deployed to almost all citizens, full-service healthcare distributors’ involvement in distributing COVID-19 vaccines has been and will remain vital in making sure vaccines reach all communities across Europe,” he continues.

As we enter 2022 with even more COVID-19 vaccines and treatments are being submitted for authorisation than last year, Member States must start deconstructing these costly centres and abrupt measures taken in the peak of the pandemic and relocate COVID-19 vaccinations back into communities through pharmacies and other community-based healthcare professionals, supported by their full-service healthcare distributors.

“Full-service healthcare distributors longstanding experience, expertise and partnerships in the healthcare sector should continue to be leveraged to ensure efficiency, and ultimately success, in vaccinating as many citizens in the shortest possible timeframe and over the long term as we continue to administer booster and consider the future rollout of other vaccinations,” urges GIRP Director General Ms Monika Derecque Pois.

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European Healthcare Distribution Association (GIRP) ([website](https://www.girp.eu))

GIRP, the European Healthcare Distribution Association, is the umbrella organisation for full-service healthcare distributors in Europe. It represents the national associations of over 750 pharmaceutical wholesalers serving

34 European countries, as well as major international and pan-European healthcare distribution companies. GIRP members employ over 140,000 people and distribute around 15 billion packs of medicines as well as a wide range of healthcare products per year. As the vital link in healthcare, they are committed to developing and providing innovative and efficient healthcare products and services to improve health and wellbeing of patients across Europe.