



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Cúnta Náisiúnta

Clár Cúraim Pobail Feabhsaithe &

Conarthaí Príomhchúraim

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte

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Date: 23rd April 2026

Circular Number: NCO-15-2026

Public Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPV23) in Community Pharmacy

Dear Pharmacist,

The Community Pharmacy Agreement 2025 (CPA25) formally expands the role of Community Pharmacists in public Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPV23) administration as part of the national immunisation programme. From 1st May 2026, Community Pharmacists will be enabled and funded to administer the PPV23 to healthy over 65-year-olds who hold a GMS Card, GP Visit Card (GPVC) or Health Amendment Act (HAA) Card.

Eligibility and reimbursement

From 1st May 2026, the following individuals will be eligible for vaccination, using HSE vaccine stock, through Community Pharmacy:

- Healthy individuals aged 65-and-older
 - Without Group A or Group B risk factors, as defined by NIAC (See Appendix I)
 - Who have not previously received PPV23 after the age of 65 years
 - Who have not received the PPV23 within the preceding 5-year period
 - Who have not received a Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) within the preceding 8-weeks
 - Who have no clinical contraindications to receipt of vaccination

Pharmacies will be reimbursed by the HSE for administering the vaccine to eligible individuals as outlined above who have GMS/GPVC/HAA eligibility. All other individuals in the eligible groups above can be vaccinated using HSE vaccine stock, and the pharmacist may charge a private fee for administering the vaccine.

Establishing vaccination history

It is the responsibility of the vaccinating pharmacist to establish the vaccination history of the individual and to take all possible steps to confirm that the patient has not received PPV23 within the preceding 5-year period, or has not previously received PPV23 after the age of 65 years. Vaccination history can be checked using the Vaccination History Search (VHS) facility in HSE PharmaVax which displays all public PPV23 vaccines administered in General Practice since September 2022 and all PPV23 vaccines administered through Community Pharmacy since September 2022. Please be aware that the following records will **not** show in the VHS:

- PPV23 administered before September 2022
- PPV23 provided privately by GPs
- PPV23 given in other settings e.g acute hospitals or private facilities
- PCV administered

Therefore vaccination history may need to be confirmed with the individual's General Practitioner or treating specialist.

Recording Vaccines

PPV23 records for both public and private vaccinations must be recorded in HSE PharmaVax, from which data is ingested into the National Immunisation Information System (NIIS). It is important that all records are entered at time of vaccination, or in any event within 7 days as required by legislation, so that clinical records are kept up to date, and are available for other providers so that duplicate vaccination does not occur.

HSE PharmaVax will now display two Payor Types for PPV23 records, as follows:

- **HSE Public** - this should be selected if the individual is over-65 and clinically eligible as outlined above **AND** has GMS/GPVC/HAA eligibility, and the Pharmacy is claiming reimbursement through PCRS. It is the responsibility of the pharmacist to confirm that that patient has current eligibility, this can be established by using the Secure Scheme Checker
- **Private** - this should be selected in both of the following cases:
 - The individual is over-65 and clinically eligible as outlined above, is vaccinated using HSE vaccine stock but does not have GMS/GPVC/HAA eligibility, and is being charged a private fee for administration of the PPV23
 - All other private PPV23 administered, where the individual is being charged for both the vaccine and the administration. Private stock should be used in this instance.

Reimbursement arrangements are summarised in Appendix II.

Fee Arrangements

- A fee of €28.50 will be paid to community pharmacy contractors for administration of a Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (PPV23) by a pharmacist to an eligible individual in the relevant age cohort under GMS/GPVC/HAA eligibility, provided that the vaccine is not administered by the community pharmacy on the same day as the administration of a publicly reimbursed influenza vaccine.
- A fee of €42.75 will apply for the administration of Influenza and PPV23 vaccinations on the same day by the community pharmacy contractor where the administration of both vaccines is publicly reimbursed.
- These fee rates will commence for vaccines administered from 1st May 2026.

If the individual does not have GMS/GPVC/HAA eligibility, it will be a matter for the community pharmacy contractor to determine a private fee for administering the vaccine.

Clinical Guidance

Guidance from the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) is available at

https://www.hiqa.ie/sites/default/files/NIAC/Immunisation_Guidelines/Chapter_16_Pneumococcal_Infection.pdf

There is no national medical eligibility and consent form for PPV23. It is the responsibility of the pharmacist to conduct a medical eligibility assessment and ensure that informed consent is obtained prior to vaccination in line with the HSE National Consent Policy.

For any clinical queries, please contact the National Immunisation Office at immunisation@hse.ie.

Training

The Medicinal Products (Prescription and Control of Supply) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 540 of 2003) (as amended) authorise a registered pharmacist to supply and administer a certain vaccines and/or emergency medicines where they have received training approved by the PSI.

In order to supply and administer any vaccine, pharmacists must first undertake training in the following programmes:

1. CPR for adults and children
2. Responding to an Emergency Situation and Management of Anaphylaxis (RESMA)
3. Medicines Administration (Parenteral) (PAMT)
4. Delivery of a Pharmacy-Based Vaccination Service

Pharmacists are also required to have up to date knowledge on the pneumococcal vaccine they are administering and can meet the training requirements in this regard by:

- completing the Administration of Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine module on the IOP portal, and/or
- through review of or having up-to-date knowledge in the relevant National Immunisation guidelines for Ireland, the Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC) for the vaccine and HSE guidance (where applicable).

Pharmacists should also ensure that they are familiar with the most recent national guidance on immunisation and the management of anaphylaxis, as contained within the Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland from the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) and guidance or updates from the National Immunisation Office.

Comprehensive information for pharmacists on the training required to supply and administer vaccines and/or emergency medicines is available on the [PSI website](#).

Vaccines & Ordering

PPV23 is now available to order online from the National Cold Chain Service (NCCS) at <https://www.ordervaccines.ie/>.

For any queries relating to vaccine orders or deliveries, contact NCCS customer services at: vaccines@udd.ie or phone 01 4637770.

Please note that HSE stock of PPV23 supplied through the NCCS is only to be administered to healthy individuals aged 65-and-older.

Queries and Support

Please see Appendix III for contact details of the relevant support teams should you have queries in relation to any aspect of this programme.

For general queries or information, please contact our Relationship Management Team:

- **Telephone:** 081 800 8811
- **Email:** pharmacyvaccines@vision.com

Thank you for taking the time to review this correspondence. We look forward to working together with you in delivering this service through community pharmacy.

Yours sincerely,



Geraldine Crowley
Assistant National Director
Enhanced Community Care Programme &
Primary Care Contracts

Appendix I: NIAC Group A and Group B Risk Factors

These patients are not eligible for PPV23 in Community Pharmacy under the HSE programme.

Table 16.1: Conditions associated with an increased risk of invasive pneumococcal disease

High risk (Group A)	Medium risk (Group B)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asplenia, hyposplenia (including splenectomy, sickle cell disease, haemoglobinopathies, and coeliac disease) • Cancer patients under hospital supervision • Chronic renal disease or nephrotic syndrome • Cochlear implant candidates and recipients • Complement deficiency (particularly C1-C4) • CSF leaks (congenital or complicating skull fracture or neurosurgery) • Haematopoietic stem-cell transplant • Immunosuppressive conditions (e.g. some B- and T-cell disorders, HIV infection, leukaemia, lymphoma), and those receiving immunosuppressive therapies¹ or corticosteroids (see Chapter 3). • Intracranial shunt • Solid organ transplant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children under 5 years of age following invasive pneumococcal disease • Chronic heart, lung, or liver disease • Diabetes mellitus requiring insulin or oral hypoglycaemic drugs • Down syndrome • Occupational exposure to metal fumes (i.e. welders) • Smokers and alcoholics

¹Individuals with primary immunodeficiency may have a suboptimal response to all vaccines. Pneumococcal vaccines are unlikely to be immunogenic in children with primary immune deficiencies involving significant B cell compromise who are receiving regular IVIG replacement therapy. However vaccination should be given as it may have some effect.

Appendix II: Reimbursement Matrix

	Eligible for HSE Vaccine Stock	Eligible for HSE Vaccine Administration Fee	Payor Field in HSE PharmaVax
Healthy individual ≥65 years with GMS / GP Visit Card / HAA Card	Yes	Yes	Public
Healthy individual ≥65 years without GMS / GP Visit Card / HAA Card	Yes	No	Private
Under 65-years in Community Pharmacy	No	No	Private

Appendix III: Support contact details

Query	Service	Telephone	Email	Commentary
Vaccine ordering & delivery issues	National Cold Chain Service (NCCS)	01 463 7770	vaccines@udd.ie	Any queries relating to quantity /allocation should be raised through the email address
Clinical queries	National Immunisation Office (NIO)		immunisation@hse.ie	
Payment queries	HSE Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS)	01 864 7100	PCRS.PPUQueries@hse.ie	Reimbursement of vaccinations only
General queries / information & relationship management	Relationship Management	081 800 8811	pharmacyvaccines@vision.com	
PharmaVax, any technical queries, usability or system issues	PharmaVax Support	01 7784998	Healthmail contact: a2ihids.support@healthmail.ie Email contact: a2ihids.support@hse.ie	Monday to Saturday 9am to 5pm
Healthmail issues	Healthmail Support	061 203 779	ictsupport@three.ie	Any queries relating to your Healthmail account including the secondary email address attached to your account
Any queries relating to cold chain maintenance or breakdown	National Immunisation Office (NIO)		pharmacynio@hse.ie	If vaccines are exposed to temperatures outside parameters, please contact a National Immunisation Office pharmacist immediately
For contract queries	National Contracts Office	044 9395519	natcontractsoffice@hse.ie	
Patient queries for the HSE	HSELive	1800 700 700	Patients can be directed to contact HSELive	Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm, Saturday, 9am to 5pm