

15 May 2026

Kia ora koutou,

## Update on HPV vaccination delivery and the role of general practice

I am writing to advise of an important change to the delivery of human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination through the School-Based Immunisation Programme (SBIP), which may increase demand for HPV vaccination in general practice from August of this year.

These changes support Aotearoa New Zealand's alignment with the WHO strategy to eliminate cervical cancer, which includes reaching 90 percent HPV vaccination coverage by 2030. HPV also causes a range of other cancers, including head and neck cancers, which are now the most common non-cervical HPV-related cancers. Our HPV immunisation coverage among 15-year-olds is currently 68.5 percent for HPV dose 1, and 60.3 percent for HPV dose 2.

### What is changing?

Currently, students in Years 7 and 8 can access two doses of the HPV vaccine in schools through SBIP alongside their scheduled booster dose of the tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (Tdap) vaccine.

From 27 July 2026 (**Term 3**), SBIP will deliver:

- HPV dose 1 (Gardasil9)
- Tdap (Boostrix)
- Catch-up measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) (Priorix)

As part of this change, there will be more opportunities to access HPV dose 1 throughout Year 7 and 8. However, HPV dose 2 will no longer be delivered in schools.

Whānau may choose to have HPV dose 2 through community providers, including pharmacies, general practice, and other community health services. HPV dose 2 will continue to be funded.

**The HPV vaccination schedule has not changed** however SBIP is focusing on delivering dose 1 because strong international evidence shows dose 1 provides comparable efficacy and durability of protection to the 2-dose course when coverage is high.

### Why the change to the SBIP prioritisation approach?

- Strong international evidence shows that dose 1 provides comparable efficacy and durability of protection to the 2-dose course when coverage is high has been supported by the World Health Organization and Aotearoa New Zealand's National Immunisation Technical Advisory Group.

- Based on this evidence, over 90 countries, including Australia and the UK have moved to a single dose of the HPV vaccine for young people under 15 years of age.
- A change to medicines legislation is required before New Zealand can formally implement a single dose HPV schedule. This change is anticipated through the Medical Products Bill, currently progressing through Parliament.
- Prioritising HPV dose 1 through schools allows SBIP to focus effort where it delivers the greatest population and equity benefit. HPV dose 2 will remain available via community providers for those wanting to complete the course.
- Aotearoa New Zealand continues to experience low uptake of HPV dose 1, alongside measles outbreaks, and a persistent pertussis epidemic. This highlights the need to prioritise increasing HPV dose 1 and other catch-up immunisations to address existing immunity gaps and maximise the impact of SBIP.

### What does this mean for PHOs and general practice?

SBIP remains a highly efficient and effective way to deliver scheduled immunisations to students in Years 7 and 8 and continues to be the primary delivery mechanism for HPV dose 1 and the Tdap booster.

Under the revised model, parents and caregivers of students receiving HPV dose 1 at school will be informed that evidence shows HPV dose 1 provides comparable protection, and that HPV dose 2 remains available through community providers and general practice for those who wish to complete the course.

Therefore, you may start to receive requests for HPV vaccination from August 2026, particularly whānau with children in Year 7 and 8 wishing to complete their HPV vaccination course. Note that:

- Primary and community care providers will **not** be expected to proactively recall or follow up for HPV dose 2 for students in Years 7 and 8 (ages 10 to 13 years).
- PHOs will **not** be performance-managed on delivery or coverage of HPV dose 2 within enrolled populations.
- Demand for HPV dose 2 in general practice is expected to be limited.
- Over 500 pharmacies currently offer HPV vaccination. This is expected to mitigate demand for HPV dose 2 and reduce pressure on general practice.

You are strongly encouraged to offer **catch-up HPV vaccination** to young people **aged 14 to 26 years**, focusing on those who have not received any HPV doses. It is estimated that ~370,000 young people aged 14 to 26 years have not had **any** doses of the HPV vaccine. Achieving high coverage in this cohort is essential to accelerate progress towards cervical and other HPV cancer elimination in Aotearoa New Zealand.

We are aware of the pressure on general practices and the primary care sector in general. Pharmacies are also being written to, so that the burden of what is likely to be a relatively small number of requests can be spread more evenly.

### **Next steps**

Communications to schools and parents/caregivers on this change is planned for late June to align with the completion of HPV dose 1 delivery in schools.

To support you with this change, Health NZ will provide patient-facing information and collateral to display in practices to support awareness. These materials will be shared in July 2026.

Thank you for your commitment to delivering immunisations. Your work is greatly appreciated and makes a meaningful difference to improving health outcomes across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Ngā mihi,



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