

19 June 2026

PHARMAC
PO Box 10254
The Terrace
Wellington 6143

Sent via email to: vaccines@pharmac.govt.nz

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Proposal for new supply agreements for funded vaccines in the National Immunisation Schedule, and widened access to influenza vaccine

The Pharmacy Guild of New Zealand (Inc.) (the Guild) is a national membership organisation and the largest representative of community pharmacy owners in New Zealand. We provide leadership on all issues affecting the sector and advocate for the business and professional interests of community pharmacy.

We support the proposed supply arrangements for funded vaccines and welcome the continued supply of funded vaccines through the National Immunisation Schedule.

We support initiatives that improve access to vaccination and reduce the burden of vaccine-preventable disease across the motu. We support the proposal to widen funded influenza vaccine access for young children, as this group experiences significant seasonal respiratory illness and healthcare utilisation. The growing number of pharmacist vaccinators authorised to vaccinate younger children places community pharmacy in a strong position to support this proposed change. We also welcome the proposed funding of newer influenza vaccine technologies and the recognition of evolving evidence and opportunities to improve vaccine effectiveness across different population groups.

Community pharmacy implementation considerations

Community pharmacies play a significant role in vaccine delivery in New Zealand and are a major provider of funded influenza vaccination services. Many also provide significant numbers of meningococcal vaccinations and contribute to improving access through convenient locations, extended opening hours, walk-in availability, and established relationships with local communities.

Given the important role of community pharmacy in vaccine delivery, we encourage Pharmac to consider the practical implications of any vaccine brand changes on providers, including:

- Any differences in storage requirements, cold-chain management, handling requirements, or shelf-life between existing and proposed vaccine brands.
- The impact of vaccine pack sizes and presentations on stock utilisation, vaccine wastage, ordering flexibility, stock management, and storage capacity within community pharmacy, particularly for rural pharmacies.
- Any training, education, or implementation support required to ensure vaccinators are familiar with new vaccine brands and presentations prior to implementation.
- Clear and timely communication regarding changes to funded vaccine brands, eligibility criteria, and implementation timeframes.

- How awareness of the widened eligibility criteria will be communicated to parents and caregivers to maximise uptake among newly eligible children.

Early communication, system readiness, and implementation support will be important for a smooth transition to new vaccine brands and minimise any disruption to vaccine delivery. This includes ensuring that AIR, pharmacy management systems (PhMS), and associated claiming processes are updated and functioning appropriately prior to implementation. We note that existing vaccine ordering and distribution arrangements are proposed to remain unchanged, which should assist with implementation and minimise disruption to vaccination providers.

Should the proposal proceed, we encourage Pharmac to ensure that vaccinators receive clear and timely information regarding the proposed vaccine brand changes, eligibility criteria, and implementation timeframes. The Immunisation Handbook and HNZ “Planning Guide - funded vaccines in community pharmacy” must also be updated to reflect the proposed changes prior to implementation to support workforce readiness and consistent application across all vaccination providers.

Access and supply considerations

We welcome the proposed removal of the Xpharm restriction from the single-pack presentation of Nimenrix (Meningococcal (groups A, C, Y and W-135) conjugate vaccine).

We note, however, that a number of other vaccines remain subject to Xpharm restrictions listed within the National Immunisation Schedule. These restrictions mean that community pharmacies are unable to directly order and stock some funded vaccines, even where trained authorised pharmacist vaccinators are available to administer them.

While we appreciate that this consultation relates primarily to vaccine supply arrangements, we encourage Pharmac to continue reviewing whether existing Xpharm restrictions remain necessary for all vaccines and whether there may be opportunities to further improve access through trained authorised pharmacist vaccinators working within community pharmacies. Enabling community pharmacies to order and administer a broader range of funded vaccines could further improve patient access and support uptake, particularly in rural, underserved, and high-needs communities where convenient access to vaccination services can be limited.

Monitoring and evaluation

We support ongoing monitoring of the impact of these changes following implementation, including uptake of newly funded and newly accessible vaccines. We also encourage Pharmac to consider whether any changes in private vaccine pricing may influence vaccination uptake among non-funded populations and whether ongoing monitoring of this impact may be warranted.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. If you have any questions about our feedback, please contact our Senior Advisory Pharmacists, Martin Lowis (martin@pgnz.org.nz, 04 802 8218) or Cathy Martin (cathy@pgnz.org.nz, 04 802 8214).

Yours sincerely,



Nicole Rickman

General Manager – Membership and Professional Services