



FOR PSA MEMBERS: **MPUMALANGA, NORTHERN CAPE, AND NORTH WEST**

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## Protecting next generation: Essential information - HPV vaccine

As a Union that prioritises the holistic well-being and social responsibility of members, the PSA issues this *Informus* to provide credible, well-researched information regarding the Department of Health's 2026 Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccination campaign. With the drive currently active across North West, Mpumalanga, and the Northern Cape, it is vital that members as parents, guardians, and community leaders are equipped with the facts to make informed decisions for their children.

### **Executive overview: Critical role of HPV vaccination in cancer prevention**

The Human Papilloma Virus is the primary driver of cervical cancer, which currently ranks as the second-most prevalent cancer amongst South African women. The 2026 national drive, which commenced on 2 February, targets girls in Grade 5 and those aged nine years and older. Scientific evidence remains undisputed: Early vaccination is the single-most effective intervention to prevent cervical malignancies later in life. Vaccinating before the onset of potential exposure creates a robust immune barrier that drastically reduces long-term healthcare burdens on the public service and families.

### **Safety mandate: Credibility and clinical assurance**

The PSA acknowledges that vaccine hesitancy is often fueled by misinformation. The PSA assures members that the HPV vaccine is backed by nearly two decades of clinical data and is approved by the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority. Millions of South African girls have been vaccinated with minimal reported side effects, typically limited to localised soreness or a mild, transient fever. The PSA's commitment to excellence in the public sector extends to advocating for evidence-based healthcare that ensures the safety of children and the sustainability of the national health system.

### **Navigating consent: Members' responsibility in 2026 Drive**

The current campaign has been expanded to include all learning institutions public, private, and special independent schools. However, a critical bottleneck remains: The consent form. No learner will be vaccinated without a signed document from a parent or legal guardian. The PSA urges all members to check their children's school bags for these forms and return these promptly. Public servants understand the importance of administrative compliance. In this context, your signature is the direct link to your child's lifelong protection.

### Addressing provincial vulnerabilities

Focus on HIV and regional health in North West, Mpumalanga, and Northern Cape health outcomes are often complicated by co-morbidities. It is a clinical fact that girls and women living with HIV are at a significantly higher risk of persistent HPV infections progressing to cancer. The vaccine is not just a preventative measure - it is a vital shield for those in high-risk environments. The PSA stands with the Department of Health in striving for the 90-70-90 targets by 2030, ensuring 90% of girls are fully vaccinated by the age of 15.

The PSA encourages shop stewards and branch leaders to disseminate this *Informus* in their departments. Education is the strongest tool in promoting a healthy workforce and a healthy nation.

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