

German Social Insurance  
European Representation  
50 Rue d'Arlon  
1000 Brussels, Belgium  
www.dsv-europa.de

Phone: +32 2 282 05-50  
info@dsv-europa.de  
www.dsv-europa.de  
Transparency Register ID:  
917393784-81



Deutsche Sozialversicherung  
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# Feedback on the European Commission's proposal for a Council Recommendation on cancer prevention, here: Measures to promote vaccination against oncogenic viruses

Opinion from German Social Insurance  
Issued 1 February 2023

## I. Preliminary remark

Preventing cancers caused by human papillomavirus (HPV) is one of the flagship initiatives of Europe's Beating Cancer plan. With its commitment to propose a Council Recommendation on vaccine-preventable types of cancer, the European Commission also intends to address cancer risks related to hepatitis B (HBV). At the same time, improved monitoring of vaccination rates will be proposed.

## II. Feedback

The German Social Insurance (DSV) supports the intention of the European Commission to support measures in the Member States to increase vaccination rates in the countries and also to monitor them better. Germany can also benefit from this.

### 1 \_ Hepatitis B

In Germany, the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) is responsible for disease surveillance and prevention. An expert committee based there (Standing Committee on Vaccination - STIKO) makes recommendations for the protective vaccinations to be carried out.

Vaccinations against hepatitis B are currently recommended:

- \_ for basic immunisation of children in infancy with three vaccine doses at the age of two, four and eleven months. The vaccination rate was 79.1 per cent for two-year-olds in 2020. It is also caught up with some of the vaccinations. The vaccination rate for children up to six years of age was 87.3 per cent.
- \_ For adults in certain occupations with an increased risk of exposure, e.g. in the medical/nursing sector of hospitals. Here, the vaccination rate is high at 96.5 per cent.
- \_ For adults who belong to certain risk groups. At 32.9 per cent, the vaccination rate here is significantly lower. The RKI also notes a reduced vaccination rate with decreasing socio-economic status.

Against this background, the intention of the European Commission to focus prevention efforts not only on pregnant women and health professionals but also on risk groups, in particular, is understandable.

## 2 \_ HPV

The STIKO recommends HPV vaccination in Germany:

- \_ for boys and girls aged between 9 to 14 (with the possibility of catching up on vaccination up to the age of 18). The vaccination series should be completed before the first sexual contact.
  
- \_ The vaccination rate in 2020 was 54.1 per cent for 15-year-old girls and 8.1 per cent for 15-year-old boys. The latter is mainly due to the fact that HPV vaccination for boys has only been recommended since 2018 and has become part of the catalogue of services provided by statutory health insurance. The STIKO assumes that the epidemiological effects of vaccinating boys would be greatly reduced if a vaccination rate of at least 60 per cent were achieved among girls.

In the European beating cancer plan, the European Commission has laid down the goal that at least 90 per cent of the target group of girls will have been vaccinated against HPV by 2030 and that the vaccination of boys will have been significantly increased in the EU Member States. Although the goal is ambitious, it is expressly supported by the DSV.

Within the scope of its responsibility, the German Social Insurance institutions support and finance the awareness of all recommended vaccinations among their insured persons and provide information about them. In the case of HPV vaccination, the health insurance funds in many cases even go beyond the STIKO recommendations and also allow vaccination of adults aged between 18 and 27. As part of the social insurance institutions' commitment to prevention, numerous projects are supported that provide education and point out the possibilities for protection, especially in schools and in the world of work.

The German Federal Pension Insurance (DRV Bund), the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV), the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Funds (GKV-Spitzenverband), the national associations for statutory health and longterm care insurance funds at the federal level and the Social Insurance for Agriculture, Forestry and Horticulture (SVLFG) have joined forces to form the "German Social Insurance - Working Group Europe" (Deutsche Sozialversicherung Arbeitsgemeinschaft Europa e. V.) with a view to their common European policy interests. The association represents the interests of its members vis-à-vis the bodies of the European Union (EU) as well as other European institutions and advises the relevant stakeholders in the context of current legislative projects and initiatives. As part of the statutory insurance system in Germany, health and longterm care insurance, pension insurance and accident insurance offer effective protection against the consequences of major risks to life.