

Introduction

Influenza vaccination (both vaccine and administration) is free for all medical cardholders and GP visit cardholders in Ireland. From mid-2001 to the end of 2008, all individuals aged 70 years and older were eligible for a medical card. Since 1st January 2009, automatic entitlement to a medical card for the over 70s no longer applied. All those aged over 70 who applied for a medical card were subject to a means test based on income. GP visit cards have been available since mid-2006. From 5th August 2015 everyone aged 70 or over, ordinarily resident in Ireland is eligible for free GP care regardless of income again. All people aged 70 or over who do not have a Medical Card or GP Visit card can register to access this service.

This report analyses data obtained from the Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS), HSE-Finance Shared Services on the number of registered medical cardholders and GP visit cardholders aged 65 years and older, as well as the number of patients vaccinated with influenza vaccine (by age group and HSE, CHO and LHO Area). Data refers to GP returns received by the PCRS during the months September 2019-May 2020. Influenza uptake rates by age group and HSE/CHO/LHO area were calculated based on the median number of registered patients with medical cards and GP visit cards during this time period. Please note that figures are dependent on GPs' claims for reimbursement and are provisional data only.

Results

The uptake for influenza vaccination nationally during the period September 2019-May 2020 in those aged 65 years and older was 58.9%. This uptake rate is less than the same period for the 2018/19 season (65.9%) and is slightly less than average (58.4%) for 2004/05-2018/19 (table 1). Variation in vaccination coverage was observed between age groups, with the highest uptake (62.9%) in those aged 75 years or older (table 2). Slight variation in vaccination coverage was also observed between HSE areas, ranging from 50.3% in HSE-NW to 62.3% in HSE-SE (figure 1). The variation in uptake between HSE/CHO/LHO areas and different age groups are presented in table 3 and figure 1, 1a, 2, 2a and 3.

Table 1: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in Medical Card and GP Visit Card Holders aged 65 years and older by season (September 2019 –May 2020), attending GP clinics and pharmacies.

Sep 2019-May 2020	19/20	18/19	17/18	16/17	15/16	13/14	12/13	11/12	10/11	09/10	08/09	07/08	06/07	05/06	04/05
No. vaccinated	342451	371265	315108	288057	280016	269157	257520	250079	259149	215012	247321	240114	245535	246758	235090
No. card holders†	581305	563006	546742	528550	505859	452931	453419	439980	431272	417192	421631	418475	405629	394672	383963
% Uptake	58.9	65.9	57.6	54.5	55.4	59.4	56.8	56.8	60.1	51.5	58.7	57.4	60.5	62.5	61.2

*Data for Sept-Dec 2014/15 season not available

Table 2: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in Medical Card and GP Visit Card Holders by age group (in years) in those aged 65 years or older, attending GP clinics and pharmacies, 2019/20.

Age group (years)	≥65	≥70	≥75	70-74	65-69	65-74
Number vaccinated	342451	293068	191864.0	101204	49383	150587
Median number card holders†	581305	4812560	304928	176332	100037	276377
% Uptake	58.9	60.9	62.9	57.4	49.4	54.5

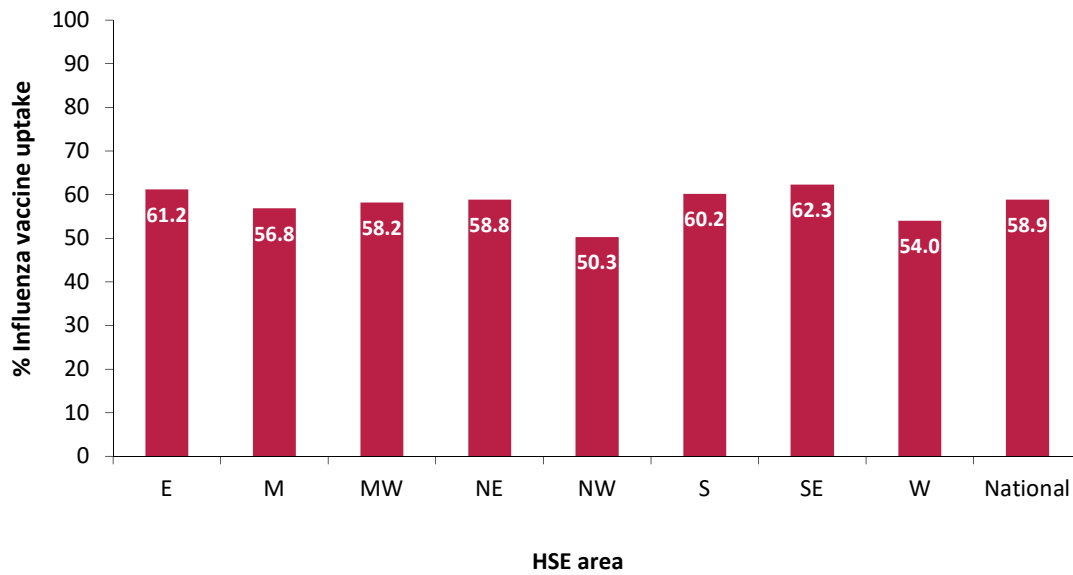


Figure 1: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in medical and GP visit card holders aged 65 years and older, by HSE-Area for patients attending GPs and pharmacies for influenza vaccination, 2019/20 (September 2019- May 2020).

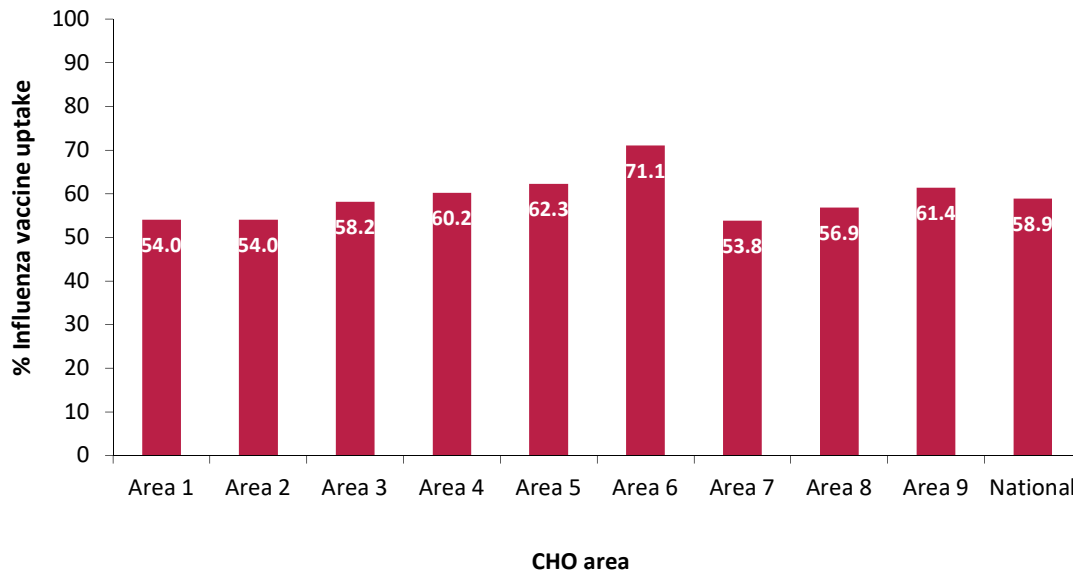


Figure 1a: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in medical and GP visit card holders aged 65 years and older, by CHO-Area for patients attending GPs and pharmacies for influenza vaccination, 2019/20 (September 2019- May 2020).

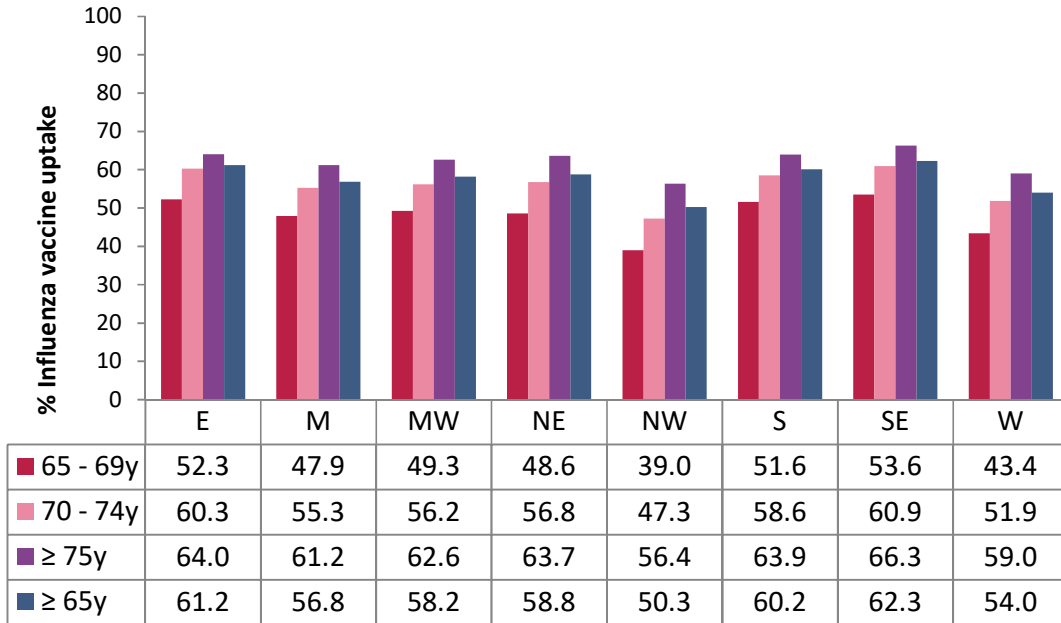


Figure 2: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in medical and GP visit card holders by age group, by HSE-Area for patients attending GPs and pharmacies for influenza vaccination, 2019/20 (September 2019- May 2020).

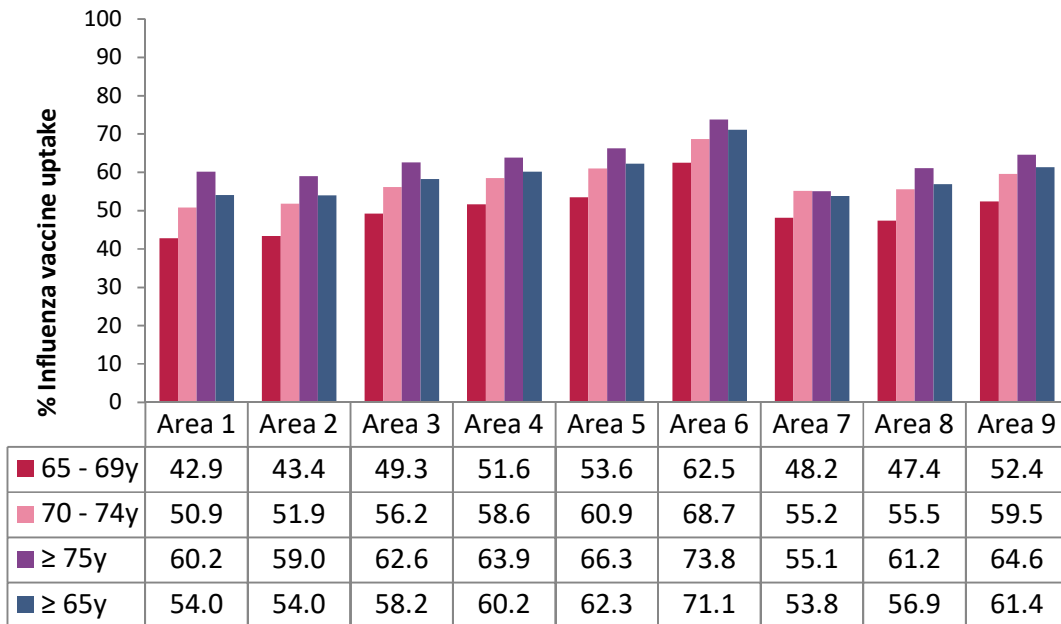


Figure 2a: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in medical and GP visit card holders by age group, by CHO-Area for patients attending GPs and pharmacies for influenza vaccination, 2019/20 (September 2019- May 2020).

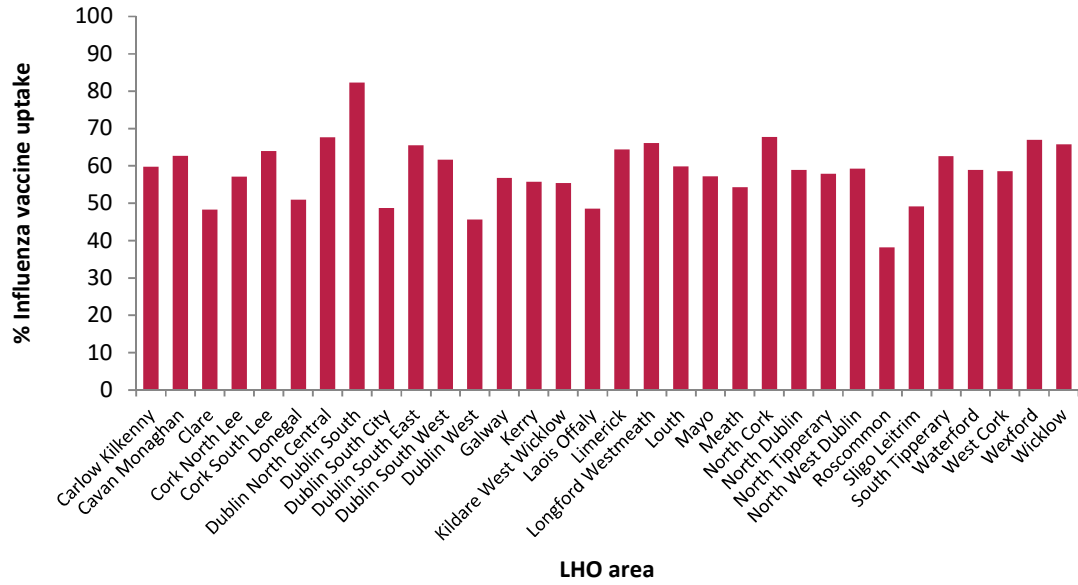


Figure 3: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in card holders[†] aged 65 years and older attending GPs and pharmacies by LHO Area, 2019/20 (September 2019- May 2020).

Table 3: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in card holders[†] aged 65 years and older by CHO and LHO Area, 2019/20 (September 2019-May 2020).

National/ CHO Area/ LHO	No. vaccinated Sep 2019-May 2020	No. of card holders [†] Sep -Dec 2019	% Uptake
National	342451	581305	58.9
Area 1	30064	55640	54.0
Cavan / Monaghan	10588	16891	62.7
Donegal	12222	23992	50.9
Sligo / Leitrim / West Cavan	7254	14757	49.2
Area 2	33814	62608	54.0
Galway	18022	31731	56.8
Mayo	12037	21047	57.2
Roscommon	3755	9830	38.2
Area 3	30283	52023	58.2
Clare	7623	15787	48.3
Limerick	16585	25746	64.4
North Tipperary / East Limerick	6075	10490	57.9
Area 4	54089	89908	60.2
Kerry	12059	21630	55.8
North Cork	8442	12454	67.8
North Lee	13835	24217	57.1
South Lee	14654	22899	64.0
West Cork	5099	8709	58.5
Area 5	43499	69875	62.3
Carlow / Kilkenny	10845	18151	59.8
South Tipperary	8232	13148	62.6
Waterford	10257	17412	58.9
Wexford	14165	21165	66.9
Area 6	35311	49669	71.1
Dublin South East	11289	17244	65.5
Dun Laoghaire	13395	16265	82.4
Wicklow	10627	16160	65.8
Area 7	37073	68852	53.8
Dublin South City	6967	14294	48.7
Dublin South West	11792	19138	61.6
Dublin West	6245	13658	45.7
Kildare / West Wicklow	12069	21763	55.5
Area 8	39520	69495	56.9
Laois / Offaly	8919	18359	48.6
Longford / Westmeath	10823	16372	66.1
Louth	9616	16054	59.9
Meath	10162	18711	54.3
Area 9	38798	63236	61.4
Dublin North	17463	29632	58.9
Dublin North Central	11380	16809	67.7
Dublin North West	9955	16796	59.3