



**An Bille Sláinte (Seirbhís Oideasaithe Frithghiniúnach a
Sholáthar i nGnóthaí Cógaisíochta Miondíola), 2026**
**Health (Provision of Contraception Prescribing Service
in Retail Pharmacy Businesses) Bill 2026**

Meabhrán Mínitheach
Explanatory Memorandum



**AN BILLE SLÁINTE (SEIRBHÍS OIDEASAITHE
FRITHGHINIÚNACH A SHOLÁTHAR I nGNÓTHAÍ
CÓGAISÍOCHTA MIONDÍOLA), 2026**
**HEALTH (PROVISION OF CONTRACEPTION PRESCRIBING
SERVICE IN RETAIL PHARMACY BUSINESSES) BILL 2026**

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The main purpose of the Bill is to make provision for the inclusion of retail pharmacy businesses as scheme providers in respect of the provision of certain contraception services referred to in section 67E of the Health Act 1970; for that purpose to amend the Health Act 1970, the Irish Medicines Board Act 1995 and the Pharmacy Act 2007; and to provide for related matters.

The objectives of the Bill are as follows:

- a) Enable the prescription of certain forms of contraception by pharmacists, including under the Free Contraception Scheme, as specified in forthcoming clinical protocols;
- b) Enable eligibility for the service under the Free Contraception Scheme, in other words, to ensure that women who are currently eligible for the FCS can also access the pharmacy prescription service, free of charge;
- c) Enable access to the service for private patients over the age of 17 and aged no more than 55 who are not eligible for the FCS but may nonetheless benefit from the convenience and lower cost of the pharmacy service to renew prescriptions;
- d) Support the clinical aspects of the service, provided for in principle under the 2024 Act and to be finalised via secondary legislation once this Bill is enacted.

The draft Bill consists of 1 part, 4 sections and a schedule.

Provisions of Bill

Section 1: Amendment of section 67E of Health Act 1970 amends the definition of ‘scheme provider’, previously limited to medical practitioners for the provision of prescriptions, to include retail pharmacy businesses entering into an agreement with the HSE for the provision of pharmacy prescription services to women, provided by a registered pharmacist in accordance with relevant pharmacy legislation.

Section 2: Amendment of section 32 of Irish Medicines Board Act, 1995 amends section 32(2)(l) of Irish Medicines Board Act 1995, to support the clinical service and associated training requirements, and to

ensure that the scheme is clearly enabled and cross-referenced through a refreshed legislative framework.

Section 3: Amendment of section 11 of Pharmacy Act, 2007 amends section 11 of the Pharmacy Act, 2007, also to support the clinical service and associated training requirements, and to ensure that the scheme is clearly enabled and cross-referenced through a refreshed legislative framework.

Section 4: Short title and commencement is the final section and provides the short title and provisions for commencement.

Sections 1-3, along with the clinical S.I.s to be drafted subsequently, align the relevant Acts to accurately define the new service and provide for clinical protocols, rules, codes of conduct and training provision for pharmacists who wish to provide the new service.

An amendment of S.I. 451 of 2022 will be required, subsequent to enactment of this Bill, to provide for the fees agreed for the pharmacy prescription service under the FCS (€37.50).

*An Roinn Sláinte,
Meitheamh, 2026.*