

Immunisation Services - Authority for Registered Nurses and Midwives

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Summary This policy directive specifies the specialist training requirements for registered nurses and midwives to become an Authorised Nurse Immuniser and details the Authority that applies to Authorised Nurse Immunisers to provide immunisation services, which are complementary to those provided by medical practitioners.

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Applies to Local Health Districts, Board Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Chief Executive Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Specialty Network Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Affiliated Health Organisations, Public Health System Support Division, Community Health Centres, Private Hospitals and Day Procedure Centres, Public Health Units, Public Hospitals, Cancer Institute (NSW)

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This Policy Directive may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Compliance with this directive is **mandatory** for NSW Health and is a condition of subsidy for public health organisations.

IMMUNISATION SERVICES – AUTHORITY FOR REGISTERED NURSES AND MIDWIVES

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy directive is to:

- Specify the specialist training requirements for registered nurses and midwives to become an Authorised Nurse Immuniser, and
- Detail the Authority that applies to Authorised Nurse Immunisers to provide immunisation services which are complementary to those provided by medical practitioners.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Authority for specially trained registered nurses and midwives to provide immunisation services without direct medical authorisation has been issued under the *Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966* and was published in the New South Wales Government Gazette No. 15, on 7 February 2014. This Policy Directive supersedes Policy Directive PD2008_033 *Immunisation Services – Authority for Registered Nurses*. All Authorised Nurse Immunisers are required to abide by this policy directive.

A list of medications which the Authority applies to is listed in section 1.3 of the attached procedures. Section 2.1 in the attached procedures describes the mandatory training requirements for registered nurses and midwives to become an Authorised Nurse Immuniser. Specific conditions which Authorised Nurse Immunisers are subject to during immunisation service delivery are detailed in section 2.2, additional considerations for conducting immunisation clinics are detailed in section 2.3 and employer responsibilities are listed in section 2.4.

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy directive applies to Authorised Nurse Immunisers only. It is not applicable to registered nurses and midwives who have not completed the specified training but who may administer vaccines under the direction and authorisation of a medical officer.

Authorised Nurse Immunisers must:

- Administer vaccines as recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council and in accordance with the current edition of *The Australian Immunisation Handbook*
- Possess the knowledge, skills, attitudes and experience to competently deliver a quality immunisation service to the community
- Have a commitment to continuous self-education to ensure professional competence to practise as an immunisation service provider.

Employers must:

- Ensure that an Authorised Nurse Immuniser is currently registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), and

- Ensure that an Authorised Nurse Immuniser fulfils the requirements specified in the attached procedures.

NSW Health will:

- Ensure that the Authority is updated following the introduction of new vaccines to the National Immunisation Program Schedule, and
- Ensure that immunisation policies are current and in accordance with the current edition of *The Australian Immunisation Handbook*.

The Australian College of Nursing will:

- Facilitate immunisation education through the provision of the College's immunisation course for registered nurses and midwives which conforms to the current edition of the *National Guidelines for Immunisation Education for Registered Nurses and Midwives*, and
- Liaise regularly with NSW Health regarding the College's immunisation course content and currency and as appropriate, and
- Assess overseas and interstate Authorised Nurse Immuniser's qualifications for recognition of prior learning to practise in NSW.

REVISION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Amendment notes
February 2015 (PD2015_011)	Deputy Secretary, Population and Public Health	Updated to include registered midwives Additional immunisation clinic considerations
June 2008 (PD2008_033)	Chief Pharmacist	Updated to include two previous instruments for rotavirus vaccine and human papillomavirus vaccine into one instrument Updated to change the requirements for annual immunisation updates.
July 2006 (PD2006_057)		New policy

ATTACHMENTS

1. Immunisation Services – Authority for Registered Nurses and Midwives: Procedures.

**Immunisation Services - Authority for Registered
Nurses and Midwives**



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1 BACKGROUND

1.1 About this document

NSW Health is fully committed to improving immunisation coverage rates and achieving national goals and targets. The immunisation status of members of the community is seen to be greatly improved if registered nurses and midwives, who have specialised training, are able to provide vaccination services that are complementary to those performed by medical practitioners.

The *Immunisation Services – Authority for Registered Nurses and Midwives* policy directive outlines the mandatory conditions which specially trained registered nurses and midwives must comply with to ensure an effective and efficient immunisation service delivery.

1.2 Key definitions

Adverse Event Following Immunisation (AEFI) – an unwanted reaction following administration of a vaccine, which may or may not be caused by the vaccine; adverse events may be at the site of the injection, or may be a general illness or a general allergic reaction.

Authorised Nurse Immuniser – a registered nurse or midwife who has completed an immunisation education program as specified in section 2.1.

Authority – the special permission granted under the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 for specially trained registered nurses and midwives to provide immunisation services without direct medical authorisation.

Immunisation - the process of inducing immunity to an infectious agent by administering a vaccine.

Medical authorisation – when a medical officer prescribes a medication for administration by a registered nurse / midwife / enrolled nurse.

Public Health Act – a government act introduced to promote, protect and improve public health, control risks to public health, promote the control of infectious diseases, prevent the spread of infectious diseases and recognise the role of local government in protecting public health.

Registered Nurse / Midwife - a person who has completed appropriate registered nurse / midwifery training, is registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and legally able to practice within the scope of their registration.

Specialised training – The Australian College of Nursing (or equivalent interstate / overseas course approved by the College) immunisation course for registered nurses and midwives which conforms to the *National Guidelines for Immunisation Education for Registered Nurses and Midwives (2001)*.

Vaccine – a product often made from killed viruses or bacteria, or from live weakened strains of viruses or bacteria; the vaccine is capable of stimulating an immune response that protects against natural ('wild') infection.

1.3 Legal and legislative framework

Authority has been granted under the NSW Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 to enable appropriately trained registered nurses and midwives provide immunisation services without direct medical authorisation. The Authority was published in the New South Wales Government Gazette No. 15, on 7 February 2014 and applies to the following medications:

Adrenaline	pertussis vaccine
Diphtheria toxoid	pneumococcal vaccine
<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> (type b) vaccine	poliomyelitis vaccine
Hepatitis A vaccine	rotavirus vaccine
Hepatitis B vaccine	rubella vaccine
Human papillomavirus vaccine	tetanus toxoid
Influenza vaccine	tuberculin (purified protein derivative)
Measles vaccine	tuberculosis vaccine
Meningococcal vaccine	varicella vaccine
Mumps vaccine.	

2 REQUIREMENTS UNDER THIS POLICY DIRECTIVE

Registered nurses and midwives must meet the education requirements outlined in section 2.1 and must comply with the specific conditions outlined in section 2.2 in order to deliver immunisation services to the community as an Authorised Nurse Immuniser. Employers must adhere to requirements specified in section 2.4.

2.1 Immunisation course requirements

2.1.1 To become an Authorised Nurse Immuniser a registered nurse / midwife must have successfully completed:

- The NSW Department of Health Immunisation Accreditation Program for Registered Nurses, or
- The immunisation education program administered by the Australian College of Nursing or its predecessors, or
- An interstate or overseas immunisation education program that conforms to the National Guidelines for Immunisation Education for Registered Nurses, as approved by the Australian College of Nursing.

2.1.2 Registered nurses, who have completed the NSW Health Department Immunisation Accreditation Course for Registered Nurses prior to 2001 and, who

undertook additional specialist training in the administration of Tuberculin Skin Test (TST) or Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG), may continue to administer these vaccines, if they are employed by a Local Health District TB Service.

2.1.3 Registered nurses, who have completed the NSW Health Department Immunisation Course for Registered Nurses prior to 2001 and who now wish to undertake additional specialist training in the administration of TST or BCG, and who are employed by a Local Health District TB Service, must undertake the complete immunisation education course as described below in point 2.1.4.

2.1.4 The immunisation education program for registered nurses and midwives is administered by The Australian College of Nursing as follows:

Immunisation for registered nurses and midwives

This course is based on the *National Guidelines for Immunisation Education for Registered Nurses and Midwives (2001)*. The course content includes:

- The theoretical foundations of immunisation
- The public health perspective
- The immune system and vaccination
- Epidemiology and vaccine preventable diseases
- Myths and realities of immunisation
- Valid consent and other legal aspects
- Adverse events following immunisation
- Handling, storage and administration of vaccines, and
- Health promotion.

Immunisation: Tuberculosis

Only registered nurses employed by a Local Health District within a designated TB Service, who have written approval from the Local Health District TB Coordinator and NSW TB Program Manager, can undertake the Immunisation: Tuberculosis course.

A pre-requisite to undertake this course is the successful completion of the NSW immunisation course for registered nurses and midwives. The course comprises two topics with both having a theoretical and a practical component:

- **TST (Topic 1):** This topic will enable the registered nurse to competently assess clients for risks, signs and symptoms of tuberculosis; to safely administer TSTs; accurately read and document reactions and to review TST policy and procedures (Topic 1 can be completed without enrolment for Topic 2)
- **BCG (Topic 2):** This topic will authorise registered nurses to administer BCG vaccinations without the direction of a medical officer within NSW (Topic 1 is a prerequisite for Topic 2).

2.2 Immunisation service delivery requirements

An Authorised Nurse Immuniser providing immunisation services to the community must:

- (1) Be employed in connection with a vaccination program, and
- (2) Administer vaccines only in connection with that vaccination program, and only as specified in the current edition of National Health and Medical Research Council's *The Australian Immunisation Handbook*, and
- (3) Undertake the appropriate vaccine storage, pre and post-vaccination assessment and administration of each vaccine at all times in accordance with the procedures specified in the current edition of the National Health and Medical Research Council's *The Australian Immunisation Handbook*, and the current edition of the *National Vaccine Storage Guidelines Strive for 5*, and
- (4) Carry an anaphylaxis response kit, and administer adrenaline, as specified in the current edition of National Health and Medical Research Council's *The Australian Immunisation Handbook* for the treatment and management of anaphylaxis during each vaccination clinic, and
- (5) Report adverse events following immunisation (AEFIs) to the local Public Health Unit, as required under the NSW Public Health Act 2010, and
- (6) Report vaccines administered to children < 7 years of age to the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register, and
- (7) Report human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccinations to the National HPV Register as appropriate, and
- (8) Ensure that a medical practitioner is contactable for medical advice at all times during the vaccination clinic, and
- (9) Annually review best practice policy for immunisation to maintain authority to immunise. This may be, but is not limited to, attendance at updates or seminars on current practices, and
- (10) Obtain an annual statement of proficiency in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation.

2.3 Immunisation Clinics – additional requirements

Additional considerations for Authorised Nurse Immunisers to deliver a safe and effective immunisation service include:

- **Immunisation clinic area** – must ensure patient privacy and safety
- **Vaccine storage area** – must be a secure location that the public cannot access
- **Vaccine cold chain storage equipment** – must be monitored and comply with the current edition of the *National Vaccine Storage Guidelines Strive for 5*
- **Anaphylaxis response kit** – must be checked and placed in a readily accessible location prior to each immunisation clinic
- **Emergency response protocols** – should be developed that include (but are not limited to), anaphylaxis response kit contents, phone access (particularly in rural / remote areas) and pre-identified roles and responsibilities during a severe adverse event following immunisation

- **Sharps containers** – must be placed in an appropriate location to avoid needle stick injuries. The handling and disposal of sharps must be in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2010)*
- **Resources** – current editions of *The Australian Immunisation Handbook* and the *National Vaccine Storage Guidelines – Strive for 5* must be readily available during each immunisation clinic.

2.4 Employer responsibilities

Employers must ensure that Authorised Nurse Immunisers are currently registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and legally able to practice within the scope of their registration in NSW. Employers must also ensure that Authorised Nurse Immunisers fulfil the requirements specified in sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 of this policy.

3 REFERENCES

National Health and Medical Research Council (2010) *Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare*. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

National Health and Medical Research Council (2013) *The Australian Immunisation Handbook* (10th edition). Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, Canberra.

National Vaccine Storage Guidelines – Strive for 5 (2013) 2nd edition. Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, Canberra.

PD2005_409 Workplace Health and Safety: Policy and Better Practice Guide - NSW Health.