

## Authorised Nurse Immunisers

**Summary** This Policy Directive outlines the mandatory conditions which specially trained registered nurses and midwives must comply with to ensure effective and efficient immunisation service delivery

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**Distributed to** Ministry of Health, Public Health System, Divisions of General Practice, Government Medical Officers, NSW Ambulance Service

**Audience** Nursing and Midwifery

## AUTHORISED NURSE IMMUNISERS

### POLICY STATEMENT

Registered nurses and midwives must be appropriately trained and accredited to deliver immunisation services and administer vaccines as an Authorised Nurse Immuniser.

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 or nurse practitioner.

### SUMMARY OF POLICY REQUIREMENTS

NSW Health organisations must have processes in place to ensure Authorised Nurse Immunisers employed by their organisation are currently registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and legally able to practice within the scope of their registration in NSW.

To become an Authorised Nurse Immuniser, a registered nurse / midwife must have successfully completed the recognised training stated in this Policy Directive.

Additional specialist training is required for registered nurses working in, or in conjunction with, NSW TB Services, to supply and administer Tuberculin and the Tuberculosis vaccine (BCG).

Authorised Nurse Immunisers must administer vaccines as recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council, and in accordance with the digital version of [The Australian Immunisation Handbook](#).

All vaccinations and restricted substances are stored in accordance with the [National Vaccine Storage Guidelines 'Strive for 5'](#).

Authorised Nurse Immunisers are to have a complete anaphylaxis kit with in-date adrenaline for use in the treatment of anaphylaxis, and ensure that procedures for the administration of adrenaline comply with digital [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#).

The Authorised Nurse Immuniser must report each adverse event following immunisation to the local Public Health Unit and ensure that a designated medical officer is contactable for medical advice.

All vaccinations administered must be recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) and maintain authority to immunise.

## REVISION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Amendment notes
December-2020 (PD2020_050)	Chief Health Officer and Deputy Secretary, Population and Public Health	Inclusion of all immunisation courses that conform to the National Immunisation Education Framework for Health Professionals and have been accredited by Health Education Services Australia Addition of COVID19 vaccine Clarification around Tuberculin and BCG administration
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. Authorised Nurse Immuniser: Procedures

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## 1 BACKGROUND

### 1.1 About this document

NSW Health is 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 and nurse practitioners.

This Policy Directive outlines the conditions which specially trained registered nurses and midwives must comply with to ensure effective and efficient immunisation service delivery.

### 1.2 Key definitions

#### **Adverse Event Following Immunisation (AEFI)**

Any untoward medical occurrence that follows vaccination. It does not necessarily have a causal relationship with 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 3 and 4.

#### **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 authorisation by a medical practitioner or suitably qualified nurse practitioner.

#### **Immunisation**

The process of inducing immunity to an infectious agent by administering a vaccine.

#### **Medical or Nurse Practitioner authorisation**

When a medical officer or nurse practitioner prescribes a medication for administration by a registered nurse / midwife / appropriately trained 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 (AHPRA) and legally able to practice within the scope of their registration.

### Specialist training

An immunisation course for registered nurses and midwives which conforms to the *National Immunisation Education Framework for Health Professionals*.

Additional specialist training specifically for Tuberculin and the Tuberculosis vaccine.

### 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 to provide immunisation services without direct medical authorisation. The Authority, which includes the list of approved vaccines, is published on the [Immunisation providers webpage](#) of the NSW Health website.

## 2 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 all requirements specified in this Policy Directive.

## 3 BECOMING AN AUTHORISED NURSE IMMUNISER

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 prior to 2001, or
- The immunisation education program administered by the Australian College of Nursing or its predecessors prior to 1 December 2020, or
- An interstate immunisation education program, as approved by the Australian College of Nursing prior to 1 December 2020, or
- An immunisation course for registered nurses and midwives that conforms to the National Immunisation Education Framework for Health Professionals, following accreditation by [Health Education Services Australia](#) (HESA) and published on the list of approved courses on the HESA website, or
- An interstate immunisation education program that conforms to the National Immunisation Education Framework for Health Professionals, as approved by an education provider following the accreditation of their course by HESA and listing of their course on the HESA website.

The immunisation education program for registered nurses and midwives is accredited by HESA as follows:

The course is based on the *National Immunisation Education Framework for Health Professionals* and is accredited by HESA as having met the *Standards for Accreditation of Immunisation Education Programs*. The course meets Standards relating to:

- The Education Provider
- The Program including curriculum design relating to:
  - The Global and Australian Context for Immunisation
  - The Immune System and Immunisation
  - Law, Ethics and Immunisation
  - Immunisation Practice.
- Participants/Students
- Resources
- Quality and Risk Management

### 3.1 Additional training requirements for Tuberculosis

Additional specialist training is required for registered nurses working in, or in conjunction with, NSW TB Services, to supply and administer Tuberculin and the Tuberculosis vaccine (BCG). The requirements are to:

- complete an accredited immunisation course for registered nurses and midwives as specified in immunisation course requirements; and
- obtain written approval from the Local Health District TB Coordinator to enrol in the additional TB training course(s); and
- complete the Immunisation: Tuberculosis Tuberculin Skin Test (TST) course for Tuberculin; and
- complete the Immunisation: Tuberculosis Bacille Calmette-Guèrin (BCG) course.

**Note:** The Immunisation: Tuberculosis Tuberculin Skin Test (TST) course must be completed prior to the Immunisation: Tuberculosis Bacille Calmette-Guèrin (BCG) course

Registered nurses who have completed the *NSW Health Department Immunisation Accreditation Course for Registered Nurses* prior to 2001 and, who undertook additional specialist training which met the *NSW Standards of Practice for Specialist TB Nurse and TB Clinical Skill Sets* in the administration of TST and/or BCG, may continue to administer these, if they are working in, or in conjunction with NSW TB Services.

## 4 REQUIREMENTS IN DELIVERING IMMUNISATION SERVICES

An Authorised Nurse Immuniser providing immunisation services must:

- only administer vaccines listed on the NSW Authority for Registered Nurses and Midwives (available from the [Immunisation providers webpage](#) of the NSW Health website), and

- be employed or engaged to provide immunisation services, and
- administer vaccines only while employed or engaged to provide immunisation services, and only as specified in the digital [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#), and
- 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 digital [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#), and the current edition of the [National Vaccine Storage Guidelines Strive for 5](#), and
- carry a complete anaphylaxis response kit, and administer adrenaline, as specified in the digital [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#) for the treatment and management of anaphylaxis during each vaccination clinic, and
- report all adverse events following immunisation (AEFIs) to the local Public Health Unit, as required under the NSW Public Health Act 2010, and
- report all vaccines administered to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)
- ensure that a designated medical practitioner is contactable for medical advice at all times during each vaccination clinic, and
- 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
- obtain an annual statement of proficiency in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, including paediatric basic life support where relevant for practice. These can be through a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or from a Local Health District / Speciality Health Network approved trainer/assessor.

## 5 IMMUNISATION CLINIC REQUIREMENTS

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

- The Immunisation clinic area must ensure patient privacy and safety.
- The vaccine storage area must be a secure location that the public cannot access.
- The 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 for completeness and currency of contents and placed in a readily accessible location prior to each immunisation clinic.
- Emergency response protocols must be developed and 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

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[Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare \(2019\)](#).

- Resources – digital [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#) and the [National Vaccine Storage Guidelines – Strive for 5](#) must be accessible during each immunisation clinic.
- Access to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) for checking previous vaccinations as well as recording of further vaccinations.
- For information on better practice for work health and safety review NSW Health Policy Directive *Work Health and Safety: Better Practice Procedures (PD2018\_013)*.