

FACT SHEET

History

The ACT Government made changes in 2020 to permit Registered Nurses and Midwives that have successfully completed a training course that meets the [National Immunisation Education Framework for Health Professionals \(December 2017\)](#) (National Education Framework) to administer certain vaccines without a prescription or standing order.

Legislation

The changes commenced under the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008 on 21 August 2020. New [ACT Registered Nurse and Midwife Vaccination Standards](#) (the Standards) have been established to set conditions for the administration of vaccines by authorised nurse and midwife immunisers.

Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods (Nurse and Midwife Immunisers) Direction 2020 (No 1) Disallowable instrument DI2020–290 made under the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008, section 353 (Authorisation for Nurse or Midwife to administer vaccine without prescription - Act, s 37 (1)(b)).

What does this mean for me as a nurse?

These changes apply to Registered Nurses and Midwives. Enrolled nurses are not included under this legislation.

Education requirements

Part B of the legislation describes the education and training requirements:

A Registered Nurse or Midwife has appropriate training and competence to administer vaccines without a prescription if they can demonstrate they have successfully completed a training course that meets the minimum requirements set out in the [National Immunisation Education Framework for Health Professionals \(December 2017\)](#) (the National Education Framework).

The following courses are accepted as meeting the curriculum requirements of the National Education Framework:

- + Any course accredited with Health Education Services Australia against the Immunisation Accreditation Standards
- + University of Melbourne – Nurse Immunisation Program
- + La Trobe University – Nurse Immuniser Program
- + University of Tasmania – Immunisation Education for Registered Nurses
- + Australian College of Nursing – 347 National Immunisation Program for Healthcare Practitioners
- + SA Health – Understanding Vaccines & the National Immunisation Program
- + QLD Health/Cunningham Centre – Registered Nurse Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 course.

An authorised Registered Nurse or Midwife must also ensure that they have the necessary knowledge, experience and commitment to continuous self-education to ensure their professional competence to practise as an immunisation service provider. This may be, but is not limited to, attendance at updates or seminars on current practices or annually reviewing best practice policy for immunisation.

Other training requirements for nurse immunisers (Condition C in the legislation)

- + ASCIA anaphylaxis e-training
- + Up to date (within last 12 months) CPR training – through your organisation, PHN or private provider.

It is the responsibility of an authorised registered nurse or midwife to ensure their continuing competency as an immunisation service provider by having sufficient knowledge and experience. This includes keeping up-to-date on contemporary practices through continuous self-education. This may be, but is not limited to, attendance at updates or seminars on current practices or annually reviewing best practice policy for immunisation.

There are record keeping requirements, point of immunisation requirements (anaphylaxis, cold chain) and reporting requirements for adverse events (AEFI) and notification of vaccinations to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

NURSE IMMUNISER FACT SHEET

Which vaccines can be given?

A registered nurse or midwife may administer, without a supply authority (prescription or standing order), any vaccine included in the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods, such as vaccines on the National Immunisation Program (NIP), **except** for:

- + Immunisation for tetanus prophylaxis related to wound management.
- + Immunisation for travel purposes, including for Yellow Fever.
- + Immunisation of contacts of a case with a notifiable condition, unless directed by the Chief Health Officer (CHO) or their delegate.
- + Immunoglobulin preparations, unless directed by the Chief Health Officer or their delegate.
- + Immunisation for Tuberculosis.
- + Immunisation for Q fever (*Coxiella burnetii*).
- + Immunisation for Rabies and other Lyssaviruses
- + Immunisation for Japanese Encephalitis.

How does this affect my practice?

Nurses can continue to immunise under the direction of a GP in their practice if that is the policy of the practice. Enrolled nurses can continue to immunise under the direction of the GP. For nurses who wish to immunise independently, this should be discussed within the practice how this can be appropriately implemented. Consider how this legislative change can affect your scope of practice.

Nurses should maintain records of their continuing professional development (CPD) including CPR training and anaphylaxis training. Consider if you would benefit from obtaining your own professional indemnity insurance outside any insurance your practice may cover you with. There are a number of providers you can consider, including APNA www.apna.asn.au or ANMF www.anmf.org.au.

What does my employer need to know?

Employers should establish clinical governance structures, documented policies and procedures to ensure authorised nurses or midwives they employ are able to provide vaccination services in accordance with the ACT regulatory requirements. This includes, but is not limited to:

- + processes for checking registration and qualifications of employed nurses and midwives
- + patient assessment and post vaccination monitoring
- + anaphylaxis management
- + vaccine cold chain management
- + record keeping and reporting of adverse events
- + provision and maintenance of equipment
- + checking professional indemnity cover for employees.

At the time of publication there is no register of authorised nurse immunisers nor any endorsements to registration to denote status.

References

Legislation and Explanatory Statement

<https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/di/2020-290/>

National Education Framework

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-immunisation-education-framework-for-health-professionals>

Nurse Immuniser information from ACT Health

<https://health.act.gov.au/health-professionals/pharmaceutical-services/nurse-and-midwife-immunisers>

Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) training

<https://etraininghp.ascia.org.au/>