The purpose of this operational directive is to advise registered nurses and program managers who have responsibilities for the delivery of immunisation programs in community health immunisation clinics or the school-based immunisation programs of the specific Western Australian (WA) legislation and Department of Health (DoH) policies that must be followed when planning and delivering school-based and community health immunisation programs.

WA legislation and DoH policies support the recommendations for vaccinations as contained in the *Australian Immunisation Handbook 9th Edition 2008* or amended version. Compliance with these policies and guidelines is mandatory.

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DIRECTOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH WA
1. **SCOPE OF PRACTICE**

Registered nurses and managers involved in the planning and delivery of school-based and community health immunisation programs must adhere to the WA legislation and Department of Health (DoH) policy documents cited below. These documents articulate the key points that a registered nurse must consider in his/her role in delivering government immunisation services.

2. **WA LEGISLATION SUPPORTING IMMUNISATION SERVICES**

- Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC) National Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse 2007 and the Enrolled Nurse 2002
- (ANMC) National Framework for the development of decision making tools for nursing and midwifery practice 2007
- ANMC Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (WA) Act 2010
- Australian Government Department of Human Services - Australian Childhood immunisation Register 1996
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- WA Occupational Safety and Health 1984
- WA Occupational Safety and Health Regulation 1996
- WA School Education Act 1999 (WA) and School Education Regulations 2000 (WA)

3. **WA LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR NURSES EMPLOYED BY WA HEALTH**

Vaccines are a Schedule 4 medicine and can be administered by:

A. registered nurses under the direction of a medical practitioner, or

B. registered nurses (e.g. community health nurses/ infection control nurses/ occupational health nurses) working within the government health services who have completed an accredited immunisation training program, as outlined in the Vaccination Administration Code 2012. Key areas of competence are outlined in the Vaccination Administration Code.

Government-employed nurses fulfilling the requirements specified in the Vaccination Administration Code 2012 are authorised to administer vaccines in accordance with Regulation 37B of the Poisons Regulation 1965.

Upon successful completion of training an Immunisation Certificate is issued by WA DoH, the Regional Immunisation Coordinator, or their delegate, to the registered nurse deeming the registered nurse competent to deliver an immunisation program in schools and/or other community settings within the public health program.

Each nurse is responsible for ensuring they maintain their competence to administer vaccines. The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia states:
“Nurses and midwives are accountable for their own practice. As with all aspects of care, practitioners should only undertake medication management activities for which they are legally entitled to perform; educationally prepared for; competent to undertake; and for which they are willing to be accountable.”

Nurses employed by the DoH who administer vaccines must be also be registered with the ANMC in Division 1 and/or 2 of the Register.

University nursing students completing their clinical training in community health immunisation programs are not precluded from administering immunisations provided that they work under the supervision of a registered nurse with demonstrated immunisation competency in accordance with ANMC and DoH policies.

4. **WA OPERATIONAL POLICY DOCUMENTS SUPPORTING IMMUNISATION SERVICES**
   - WA Immunisation Schedule (as amended periodically)
   - Memorandum of understanding with the Education Department 2010-2013, or as amended
   - Health Care Worker Immunisation Policy OD 0388/12
   - Medication Administration – Role of the Enrolled Nurse OD 0376/12
   - Updated: national recommendations for user-applied labelling of injectable medicines, fluids and lines OD 0385/12
   - Influenza Vaccination for Pregnant Women OD 0363/12
   - Clinical Incident Management Policy OD 0341/11
   - Vaccine Cold-chain Guidelines OD 0355/11
   - Rural and remote policies relating to the use of medications 2011
   - School Health Service Policy OD 0281/10 or as amended
   - Hepatitis B Vaccination Program OD 0237/09
   - Clinical and Related Waste Management – Clinical Wastes OD 0259/09
   - Disposal of Records OD 0110/08
   - WA School based vaccination program guidelines 2008, or as amended
   - Management of Occupational Exposure to Blood and Body Fluids in the Health Care Setting OD 0091/07 or as amended

5. **NATIONAL DOCUMENTS RELATING TO IMMUNISATION SERVICES**
6. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMUNISATION SERVICE PROVISION

The Australian Immunisation Handbook 9th Edition 2008, or as amended, outlines the recommendations for immunisation service providers (ISP) for delivering vaccination programs; these guidelines provide recommended ‘best practice’ and are endorsed by the Department. Issues addressed in the Handbook include:

- recommended vaccines and dosages to be used for age specific cohorts as part of the National Immunisation Program
- vaccines recommended for special at-risk groups
- contraindications to vaccines
- setting up an immunisation clinic or vaccination session
- consent processes to be followed
- administration of vaccines
- management of anaphylaxis
- provision of immunisation information and resources
- best practice standards for ensuring the safety of ISP and the vaccine recipient
- actions to be followed in the event of refusal of vaccination by a parent
- managing and reporting suspected adverse events following vaccination
- cold chain maintenance/storage of vaccines.

7. THE NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT FOR ESSENTIAL VACCINES

Under the National Partnership Agreement for Essential Vaccines (NPAEV), States and Territories are expected to meet key performance indicators. These indicators require jurisdictions to:

1. maintain or increase vaccine coverage for Indigenous Australians
2. maintain or increase immunisation coverage in agreed areas of low immunisation coverage
3. maintain or increase vaccination coverage for four year old children and
4. maintain or decrease vaccine wastage and leakage.

Community health immunisation service providers play a key role in supporting DoH efforts to meet the NPAEV performance indicators. All health services should ensure that their immunisation program policies include strategies that aim to meet the NPAEV immunisation outcomes, and that their immunisation service providers adhere to the recommendations contained in the legislation, regulation and policy documents specified in this OD. Strategies intended to address the NPAEV indicators above must include implementing the “best practice” principles outlined in the Australian Immunisation Handbook. Community health immunisation service providers should develop policies to routinely recall children overdue for vaccination and to enter all immunisation encounters into Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR).
8. **SCHOOL-BASED IMMUNISATION TEAMS**

School-based immunisation teams will vary in size across WA, according to the number of students to be vaccinated at each school. There is no legislative requirement for more than one registered nurse to conduct immunisation in community-based immunisation clinics or the school-based immunisation program.

Each school-based immunisation team must consist of at least one registered nurse who has completed their certification for immunisation and is authorised to vaccinate according to the *Vaccination Administration Code 2012* and Regulation 37B of the *Poisons Regulation 1965*. Registered nurses who are part of a school-based immunisation team are individually responsible for maintaining the recommended standards of clinical practice when delivering an immunisation service.

In situations where a nurse appointed to assist on the school-based immunisation team has not completed his/her immunisation training, she must work under the delegation of the registered nurse who is authorised to administer vaccinations.

Health services should ensure that community nurses are aware of their health service medication policy which outlines their responsibility in administration of medication/vaccines. This policy should include defined processes for the registered nurse to adopt to ensure clinical and safety standards are met.

9. **ADDITIONAL REFERENCES**


3. *Health (Notification of Adverse Event After Immunisation) Regulations 1995 (Regulations4).*

10. **GENERAL IMMUNISATION INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED FROM:**