

## Immunisation Services provided by practice nurses in NSW

In NSW Registered Nurses and Enrolled Nurses are regulated professions. It is an offence under law to use these titles or to portray in any manner behaviour that suggests the person is a registered nurse or enrolled nurse if the person is not registered by the Nurses registration Board.

The title Nurse Practitioner is a protected title in NSW and it is an offence under law to use that title if the person is not registered to do so.

### Registered Nurses

- To provide immunisation services the registered nurse must either:
  - Administer vaccines under the direction of a medical officer. Direction refers to either a written or verbal order. The doctor does not need to be in the vicinity during vaccine administration. The doctor may or may not see the patient before he gives the order.
  - **or** be authorised to provide immunisation services without direct medical supervision under the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966. The registered nurse is authorised to make the decision to vaccinate the person. The doctor is not involved in this process.

To be granted authority:

- The nurse must have successfully completed
  - The NSW Health Department Immunisation Accreditation Program for Registered Nurses prior to 2001 and/or
  - The immunisation education program administered by the College of Nursing from 2001 and/or
  - An interstate or overseas immunisation education program that conforms to the National guidelines for Immunisation Education for Registered Nurses and as approved by the College of Nursing.
- The Authority to supply restricted substances applies to the following vaccines only, either singly or in combination:
  - Diphtheria
  - *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) vaccine
  - Hepatitis A vaccine
  - Hepatitis B vaccine
  - Influenza vaccine
  - Measles, mumps, rubella vaccine
  - Meningococcal vaccine
  - Pertussis vaccine
  - Pneumococcal vaccine
  - Poliomyelitis vaccine

- Rubella vaccine
  - Tetanus vaccine
  - Tuberculin purified protein derivative (special conditions apply)
  - Tuberculosis vaccine (special conditions apply)
  - Varicella vaccine
- The nurse must be employed in connection with a vaccination program in a health service or place of employment.
  - The Immunisation Course for Registered Nurses is conducted by the College of Nursing as a distance education module. Places are available each month. The Course takes 70 hours or 12 weeks to complete.
  - Authorised nurse immunisers are not able to delegate the administration of a vaccine to another person eg. enrolled nurse.

### **Enrolled Nurses**

In NSW enrolled nurses work under the direction and supervision of registered nurses.

While it is not illegal for enrolled nurses to work under the direction of a doctor this practice is not supported by the Nurses Registration Board (NRB). An enrolled nurse who chooses to work under the direction of a doctor is not in breach of the Nurses Registration Act but is in breach of their Professional Code of Conduct and the NRB considers such conduct as not professionally appropriate. Any complaints arising from such behaviour would be dealt with by the Health Care Complaints Commission.

To administer medications an enrolled nurse must have their practising-certificate endorsed by the NRB. Endorsement is only possible if the enrolled nurse has completed either an addition education program at the College of Nursing or TAFE or from 2004 the medication module within the Enrolled Nursing Education Program conducted by TAFE.

Intake for the Enrolled Nursing Education Program is available 3 times a year in March, May and October.

Enrolled nurses who have not completed a NRB accredited medication course are not permitted to administer Schedule 4 medications. Vaccines are Schedule 4 medications.