

Immunisation is one of the most frequent tasks assigned to nurses working in General Practice. The following information has been provided to assist practice nurses to better understand the *Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966* PURSUANT to clauses 166 and 167 of the *Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2002*, which governs the administration of vaccines in New South Wales.

The following information should be used as a guide only and further clarification sought by referring to the relevant documents listed as references.

- Nurses working in general practice do so in line with the Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) *Competency Standards for Nurses in General Practice*. Nurses working in general practice must adhere to their legislative requirements under their scope of practice outlined in the ANF position statement for nurses working in a medical practice.
- Vaccines are restricted (Schedule 4) drugs.
- A **registered nurse (RN)**, **nurse practitioner (NP)** or **endorsed enrolled nurse (EEN)** who is registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia is able to administer a restricted drug on the written instruction of a medical officer.
- A class of RN or nurse practitioner in NSW who has completed defined training in immunisation is eligible to administer defined vaccines as outlined in the *NSW Health Policy Directive Immunisation Services PD2008_033 - Authority for Registered Nurses* independent of a written instruction from a medical officer. This class of nurse is commonly referred to as an **authorised nurse immuniser**. The Policy Directive lists specific vaccines and definitive conditions, to which specially trained registered nurses must conform.
- This directive is not applicable to RNs or NPs who have not completed such defined training but who may administer vaccines under the written direction and authorisation of a medical officer.
- The list of vaccines which an accredited nurse immuniser is eligible to administer under the NSW Health Policy Directive mentioned above was updated in 2008. The *NSW Government Gazette No. 66. Authorisation to Supply Poisons and Restricted Substances* is the most current authority governing vaccine administration by an accredited nurse immuniser.
- An **enrolled nurse (EN)** may administer vaccines where they have:
 1. Successfully completed an Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) accredited course that includes a medication component.
 2. The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia has issued the EN with an endorsement for the administration of medications by a notation on the enrolled nurse's online *Authority to Practice* which can be accessed through the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
- An EN who meets the above criteria is eligible to administer a vaccine under a doctor's written order and under the direct or indirect supervision of a registered nurse. This class of nurse is commonly referred to as an **endorsed enrolled nurse (EEN)**.
- The Medicare item number 10993 which provides a payment for an immunisation service administered by a RN, NP or EEN in general practice does not override these regulatory requirements.
- Under NSW Health legislation, Aboriginal health workers (AHWs) cannot prepare or administer any vaccine in either the primary care or outreach setting.

Further information

What is the difference between RNs and ENs and EENs?

For further information on the differences between classes of nurses in general practice, please refer to *Definitions and qualifications for registration as a nurse*, accessed via the GP NSW website at the link below.

<http://www.gpnsw.com.au/programs/nursing-in-general-practice/professional-issues>

What does supervision of ENs mean?

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia expects that nurses and midwives practice in accordance with regulatory requirements and follow the codes of conduct adopted by the board. The board has also endorsed the national competency standards for registered nurses, registered midwives and enrolled nurses as the minimum requirement for practice and it is expected that all nurses and midwives maintain a level of practice that is consistent with these standards.

Supervision encompasses monitoring and directing performance of specific activities for a defined time period. Supervision of ENs by RNs can be direct or indirect depending on: the competence of the EN for the scope of nursing practice; the condition of the person receiving nursing care; and the context in which the care is given.

- Direct supervision¹

The RN is actually present, observes, works with and directs the person who is being supervised.

- Indirect supervision¹

The RN is easily contactable but does not directly observe the activities.

It is the policy of the ANF that the employer makes sure that appropriate supervisory arrangements are in place to ensure ENs and EENs maintain their competence and work within their scope of practice.

More information on supervision of ENs can be found in the ANF Competency Standards for Nurses in General Practice - Professional Supervision of Enrolled Nurses.

Definitions to assist in interpretation of commonly used terms

Scope of Nursing Practice

The scope of nursing practice is that which nurses are educated, authorised and competent to perform. The actual scope of practice of individual practitioners is influenced by the settings in which they practice, the health needs of the people, the level of competence of the health professional and the policy requirements of the service provider.

Accountability

Accountability means different things to different classes of nurse and in different settings. For an RN working in general practice, they must be prepared to be accountable to the general practitioner (GP) for the nursing care provided. For EENs and ENs working in general practice, they must be prepared to be accountable to others, namely the GP and/or RN for their actions and to the RN for delegated nursing functions.

Responsibility

Responsibility indicates that the activities are within the person's usual capacity and functions.

Delegation

Delegation is the “granting of authority” to perform specified activities to a person whose role does not normally encompass them. In the general practice nursing context, these activities must be within the nurse’s scope of practice.

References and Useful Links

1. Australian Nursing Federation (2005). *Competency Standards for nurses in general practice – Professional Supervision of Enrolled Nurses*. www.anf.org.au/nurses_gp
2. Australian Nursing Federation (2005). *Position Statement for nurses working in a medical practice* http://www.anf.org.au/pdf/policies/PS_Nsg_General_Medical_Practice.pdf
3. *Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 (NSW)*. www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/patga1966307/
4. NSW Health (2008). *Immunisation Services – Authority for Registered Nurses (PD2008_033)* www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2008/PD2008_033.html
5. NSW Health Department (2004). *The Administration of Medication by Endorsed Enrolled Nurses (PD2005_343)* http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/PD/2005/PD2005_343.html
6. NSW Health Department (2008). *NSW Government Gazette No. 66. Authorisation to Supply Poisons and Restricted Substances* www.health.nsw.gov.au/PublicHealth/Immunisation/programs/nurse_authority.asp
7. The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/>
8. Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (2008). *Code of Professional Conduct and Code of Ethics for Nurses* <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-and-Guidelines.aspx>

Contacts for further information

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- o Members of the GP NSW Nursing in General Practice Reference Group

Immunisation activities provided in general practice – by health professional type

Aboriginal Health Worker (AHW)	Enrolled Nurse (EN)	Endorsed Enrolled Nurse (EEN)	Registered Nurse (RN) Nurse Practitioner (NP)	RN/ NP - Authorised Nurse Immuniser
<p>CAN The role of an AHW in immunisation provision can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - community promotion - develop and distribute promotional resources and information - support to community - patient education and information - cold chain; fridge monitoring, re-stocking fridge, packing esky for outreach clinics - development and management of computer systems <p>This would ideally be done under the supervision of an RN or GP</p> <p>CANNOT Prepare or administer any vaccine in either the primary care or outreach setting in NSW.</p>	<p>CAN The role of an EN in immunisation provision can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - community promotion - develop and distribute promotional resources and information - support to community - patient education and information - cold chain; fridge monitoring, re-stocking fridge, packing esky for outreach clinics - development and management of computer systems <p>This would ideally be done under the supervision of an RN or GP</p> <p>CANNOT Prepare or administer vaccines under any circumstances in NSW.</p>	<p>CAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and administer vaccines following a GP's written order and under the direct or indirect supervision of a RN in general practice • Delegate non-clinical vaccine management tasks to ENs and/or AHWs • Claim the Medicare Item no. 10993 for Immunisation services provided by a practice nurse. <p>CANNOT Prepare or administer a vaccine independently of a GP's written order or whilst not supervised by an RN.</p>	<p>CAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and administer vaccines with a written order from a general practitioner • Delegate non-clinical vaccine management tasks to ENs and/or AHWs • Claim the Medicare Item no. 10993 for Immunisation services provided by a practice nurse. <p>CANNOT Prepare or administer vaccines independently of a written order from a GP.</p>	<p>CAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and administer vaccines listed on the <i>NSW Health Policy Directive Immunisation Services - Authority for Registered</i> independently of a written order from a general practitioner • Delegate non-clinical vaccine management tasks to EN's and/or AHWs • Claim the Medicare Item no. 10993 for Immunisation services provided by a practice nurse. <p>CANNOT Prepare or administer vaccines not listed on the above mentioned policy directive without a written order from a general practitioner.</p>