

# Secretary Approval: Nurse Immunisers – SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) VACCINE

Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2017, regulation 161

Regulation 8 of the *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2017* (the **Regulations**) authorises nurses and registered midwives to be in possession of Schedule 4, Schedule 8 and Schedule 9 poisons that are necessary for administration to a patient.<sup>1</sup> Where that authorisation is not otherwise granted by the Regulations or the *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981* (the **Act**), authorisation can be granted by the approval of the Secretary under regulation 161. In making this approval under regulation 161, the Secretary considers that the possession is (a) necessary for the provision of health services and (b) within the competence of a nurse without the supervision or instruction of a medical practitioner, dentist, nurse practitioner, authorised midwife, authorised optometrist or authorised podiatrist (as the case requires). Authorisation has not otherwise been granted by the Regulations or the Act.

## Secretary Approval: Nurse Immunisers - SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) VACCINE

### Approval under Regulation 161(1) of the *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2017* to possess in order to administer without supervision or instruction

- 1. The approval applies to a nurse who is registered in Division 1 of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia register and is not already endorsed to possess Schedule 4 Poisons under section 94 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and who provides evidence to their employer of currency of competence and ongoing professional development in immunisation and who:**
  - on 30 June 2010 was registered in division 1 of the register of nurses endorsed under section 27A of the *Health Professions Registration Act 2005* by the Nurses Board of Victoria<sup>2</sup> in the approved area of practice – Immunisation;**OR**
  - has satisfactorily completed the assessment of a nurse immuniser program recognised by the Chief Health Officer (see Note);**OR**
  - has satisfactorily completed the assessment of an 'Immuniser program of study' recognised by the Chief Health Officer, providing the education provider offers the program to nurses;**OR**

<sup>1</sup> Included in Schedules 4, 8 and 9 respectively of the Poisons Standard.

<sup>2</sup> This does not include limited registration, provisional registration, non-practising registration, or student registration.

- has satisfactorily completed a nurse immuniser program not recognised by the Chief Health Officer and has written confirmation from the program provider that, at the time the program was completed, the program was of equivalent standard to a program currently recognised by the Chief Health Officer;

**OR**

- has satisfactorily completed the assessment of an 'Immuniser program of study' that meets the curriculum content requirements of the National Immunisation Education Framework for Health Professionals;

**AND**

- has successfully completed the Commonwealth COVID-19 Vaccination Training Program;

**AND**

- has satisfactorily completed any additional training and competency requirements required by the Victorian COVID-19 Vaccination Guidelines.

**Note** – For the nurse immuniser programs recognised by the Chief Health Officer see

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/immunisers-in-victoria/nurse-immunisers>

**2. The nurse may possess the following Schedule 4 poison in order to administer without supervision or instruction:**

Generic name	Approval for nurses to possess this vaccine in order to administer <i>applies to</i>	Approval for nurses to possess this vaccine in order to administer <i>excludes</i>
SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) VACCINE  (COVID-19 VACCINE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possession of the COVID-19 VACCINE for the purpose of administering it to people approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration as eligible to receive the vaccine, excluding those circumstances listed in Column 3.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possession of the COVID-19 VACCINE for the purpose of administering it to people ineligible to receive the vaccine in accordance with regulatory approval granted by the Therapeutic Goods Administration;</li> <li>• Possession of the COVID-19 VACCINE for the purpose of administering it to people with contraindications defined in the current edition of the <i>Australian Immunisation Handbook</i>.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>

**3. The following circumstances apply:**

- (a) The nurse may administer the COVID-19 VACCINE that has been reconstituted in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and transferred to a single-use syringe ready for administration by a person authorised by the Secretary to do so.
- (b) **The nurse must be employed, contracted or otherwise engaged by:**
- a medical practitioner; or
  - a municipal council which employs, contracts or ensures access to a medical practitioner or nurse practitioner; or
  - a health services permit holder who employs, contracts or ensures access to a medical practitioner or nurse practitioner; or
  - an agency funded by the Victorian Government or the Government of Australia who employs, contracts or ensures access to a medical practitioner or nurse practitioner.

<sup>3</sup> Current version available online.

- (c) The medical practitioner or nurse practitioner referred in paragraph (b) is available to provide advice to the nurse on the use of the COVID-19 VACCINE when needed.
- (d) The nurse possesses and administers only the Schedule 4 poisons obtained by the medical practitioner, municipal council, health services permit holder or Victorian Government or Government of Australia-funded agency, by whom the nurse is employed, contracted or otherwise engaged.
- (e) The nurse administers the COVID-19 VACCINE in:
- i. the performance of their duties with the medical practitioner, municipal council, health services permit holder or Victorian Government or Government of Australia-funded agency (as the case requires); and
  - ii. accordance with the edition of the Australia Immunisation Handbook<sup>4</sup> that is current at the time of the administration; and
  - iii. accordance with the edition of the *National Vaccine Storage Guidelines: Strive for 5*<sup>5</sup> that is current at the time of the administration; and
  - iv. accordance with the Victorian COVID-19 Vaccination Guidelines current at the time of administering the COVID-19 VACCINE; and
  - v. accordance with any guidelines issued by the Victorian Government or Government of Australia in relation to any COVID-19 VACCINE that are the current edition at the time of the administration.

Approved by PROFESSOR EUAN WALLACE:



Date: 13 October 2021

Secretary, Department of Health

This Approval supersedes the Secretary Approval: Nurse Immuniser – SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) VACCINE published in the Government Gazette S 80 21 February 2021 pp. 1 – 3 and takes effect on the date of publication in the Government Gazette and continues in force for a period of not more than twelve months, unless revoked earlier.

<sup>4</sup> Current version available online.

<sup>5</sup> Current version available online.