

Australian Capital Territory

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))

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Section 353 of the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008 (the MPTGR) establishes that a registered nurse or midwife is authorised to administer a vaccine to a person in the absence of a supply authority (prescription or standing order) if the registered nurse or midwife administers the vaccine in accordance with a direction by the Chief Health Officer.

That same section also provides that the Chief Health Officer may, by disallowable instrument, give directions for the administration of a vaccine to a person in the absence of a supply authority (prescription or standing order) by a registered nurse or midwife.

This instrument is a direction of the Chief Health Officer issued under section 353 of the MPTGR. The direction instructs that a registered nurse or midwife may administer a vaccine in the absence of a supply authority (prescription or standing order) if they comply with the ACT Registered Nurse and Midwife Vaccination Standards (Vaccination Standards) imposed by the Chief Health Officer at Schedule 1 of the instrument.

The Vaccination Standards are made for the purposes of establishing conditions and criteria under which a registered nurse or midwife may initiate administration of vaccines in the absence of a supply authority (prescription or standing order). The Vaccination Standards apply to a ‘registered nurse or midwife’ which means a person who holds registration under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (ACT)* to practice in the nursing or midwifery professions. The Vaccination Standards do not relate to an enrolled nurse.

In addition, the Vaccination Standards do not preclude a registered nurse practitioner or endorsed midwife from administering a vaccine without a prescription within their scope of practice.

Part A of the Vaccination Standards specifies which vaccines a registered nurse or midwife is authorised to initiate administration of in the absence of a supply authority (prescription or standing order).

This Part specifies that a registered nurse or midwife may, without a prescription or standing order, administer any vaccine included in the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods, with defined exceptions. This is intended to enable an authorised nurse or midwife immuniser (as defined by Part B of the Vaccination Standards) to administer any Australian registered vaccine (unless excepted in this Part) including the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes registered (including provisionally registered) and available in Australia.

Part B of the Vaccination Standards specifies the training and qualification requirements for a registered nurse or midwife to be authorised to initiate administration of vaccines in the absence of a supply authority (prescription or standing order).

The document specifies that registered nurses or midwives must 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) (National Framework).

At the time of notification of these Vaccination Standards, Health Education Services Australia (HESA) is in the process of accrediting course that meet the minimum requirements of the National Framework, however no formal list of courses has been published. It is intended that as courses become accredited, they will automatically be recognised as meeting the educational requirements of the Vaccination Standards.

As there is currently no published list of courses accredited by HESA, the Vaccination Standards list several courses accepted by the ACT Health Directorate as meeting the National Framework.

This section also makes it clear that 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.

Part C of the Vaccination Standards establishes a number of condition requirements that a nurse or midwife must meet to be authorised to initiate administration of vaccines in the absence of a supply authority (prescription or standing order).