

Medicines and Poisons Act 2019

Factsheet – current as at September 2021

Immunisation programs – registered nurses

Background

A general approval is a type of *substance authority* under the *Medicines and Poisons Act 2019* (MPA) that authorises a person to carry out a *regulated activity* with a *regulated substance* stated in the approval.

Applications for general approvals are considered carefully, on their merits, and having regard to specific criteria. An identified class of general approval is for registered nurses carrying out immunisation programs under the Extended Practice Authority – Registered Nurses (EPARN).

Extended practice authority - Registered Nurses

Registered nurses are afforded authorisations under Schedule 7 of the *Medicines and Poisons (Medicines) Regulation 2021* (MPMR), including the authority to administer certain scheduled medicines. Schedule 7, part 3, section 11(2)(e) of the MPMR authorises registered nurses to administer an S4 or S8 medicine mentioned in the EPARN.

As the name suggests, the extended practice authority provides an *extension* to what a registered nurse may do under the MPA. The EPARN, among other things, authorises registered nurses to administer or supply medicines in specific clinical circumstances.

Part D of the EPARN refers to ‘immunisation program services’. This part provides the authority for registered nurses to administer a vaccine that contains an antigen listed in Appendix 4 of the EPARN: ‘Queensland Immunisation Program medicines’, subject to the following limitations described in Part D (our emphasis **bolded**):

“5.1. A registered nurse may only administer the medicines under Part D of this EPA if the registered nurse has successfully completed any of the following:

5.1.1. an approved program of study for endorsement as an Immunisation Program Nurse with the former Queensland Nursing Council.

5.1.2. a qualification in immunisation previously approved by the chief executive under the (repealed) *Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996*.

5.1.3. an accredited immunisation training course that contains learning objectives equivalent to the domains in the *National Immunisation Education Framework for Health Professionals*.”

5.2 To the extent necessary to provide immunisation services, a registered nurse is authorised to administer a medicine if any of the following apply:

5.2.1. the services are provided under an immunisation program carried out by a Hospital and Health Service.

5.2.2. the services are provided under an immunisation program carried out by the Queensland Health.

5.2.3. the services are provided under an immunisation program carried out by a local government.

5.2.4. the services are provided under an immunisation program that was certified under the (repealed) *Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996* and until the date stated in the program to be the end of the certification.

5.2.5. the services are provided under an immunisation program authorised under a **general approval** given to provide an immunisation program under the *Medicines and Poisons Act 2019*."

Where a registered nurse is not authorised under sections 5.2.1-5.2.4 (inclusive) above, then a general approval (immunisation program) will be required as per section 5.2.5 of the EPARN.

There are other requirements the EPARN imposes in relation to registered nurses providing immunisation program services, including requirements for health management protocols. The EPARN should be carefully reviewed in its entirety, by any person seeking to apply for a general approval (immunisation program) or any registered nurse seeking to act under the EPARN.

How do I apply for a general approval (immunisation program)?

An application may be made to the chief executive for a general approval (immunisation program), for the purpose of providing an immunisation program by registered nurses.

Applications must meet the requirements set out in the EPARN and be made in the approved form. Applications are generally made by entities/organisations and not individual registered nurses. General approvals (immunisation programs) are granted to entities/organisations carrying out immunisation program services, which will cover suitably qualified individual registered nurses working for the entity/organisation.

Associated guidance documents

- General approvals – factsheet
- Extended Practice Authorities - factsheet
- Extended Practice Authority – Registered Nurses
- General approval (immunisation program) initial application form
- General approval (immunisation program) renewal application form
- General approval (immunisation program) amendment application form

Further information

For further information, contact the Healthcare Approvals and Regulation Unit:

- Email: HARU@health.qld.gov.au.