

Policy 2.5 - Medical Directive Required for the Provision of Immunization Services (including the administration of immunizing agents and the management of adverse events following immunization).

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide standards to Public Health nurses and community health nurses⁵ and their employers concerning the requirements for medical directives to administer vaccine through the publicly funded New Brunswick Immunization Program.

Preamble: Providing immunization is within the scope of practice for registered nurses in New Brunswick. Nurses are guided by professional practice standards and are at all times accountable for their practice and compliance with relevant standards.

Providing safe immunization requires that the provider⁶:

- a. has the knowledge, skill and judgment to assess the appropriateness of administering the vaccine to individual clients;
- b. has the knowledge of the specific vaccines being offered including vaccine actions, interactions, expected side-effects and potential adverse events;
- c. communicates the risks and benefits associated with the vaccine as well as the risks associated with not being immunized;
- d. assesses the client to determine the presence of contraindications and/or precautions for receiving the vaccine, including the risk of anaphylaxis;
- e. administers vaccine following the recommended dose, route, site and schedule;
- f. monitors the client during and following vaccine administration;
- g. anticipates, identifies and manages any immediate adverse events following immunization; and
- h. Follows vaccine storage and handling guidelines according to established standards.

Regional Medical Officers of Health have a mandate to provide the medical direction necessary for the administration of vaccine/biologics and the management of immediate events following the administration of vaccine within the regional health authority Public Health setting.

Additionally, upon request from the administrative authority responsible for the provision of Public Health immunization programs in First Nations communities, the Regional Medical Officer of Health may provide a medical directive for the provision of services in that community.

Policy: Nurses working in Public Health settings under the regional health authorities and, where applicable, nurses working in First Nations' community health programs, will provide immunization services under the medical direction of the Regional Medical Officer of Health.

⁵ The term "community health nurses" refers to those nurses working in First Nations communities.

⁶ Adapted from: Info Nursing, Volume 41, Issue 2, Fall 2010, *Influenza Immunization, RNs Prepare for Flu Season*, Virgil Guitard & Liette Clément.

Procedures:

1. A medical directive for immunization services will be provided for Public Health nurses and community health nurses following consultation among the parties involved; namely, the Regional Medical Officer of Health; the administrative authority for immunization service delivery in each organization; and the nurses affected by the directive. The nurses may be represented by the immunization co-ordinator or designate. Refer to Appendix 4.1.1 *Medical Directive for the Provision of Immunization Services*, including vaccine administration and the management of adverse events following immunization.
2. In the case of Public Health nurses employed by the regional health authorities, the director of public health programs (or designate) will ensure that all conditions of the medical directive are met.
3. In the case of community health nurses employed by a First Nations health service, the administrative authority responsible for the provision of immunization services will ensure that all conditions of the medical directive are met.
4. The medical directive will be reviewed by all parties and updated each fiscal year.
5. A copy of the medical directive will be available to staff in all sites where the medical directive is applied. Refer to Appendix 4.1.1 *Medical Directive for the Provision of Immunization Services*.