State Legislation/Regulation Affecting Immunisation by Practice Nurses in General Practice

The Australian Government fact sheet about the new MBS item 10993, which remunerates practices for immunisation services provided by practice nurses, states that “the practice nurse must... be appropriately qualified and trained, including compliance with any state or territory requirements, to provide the relevant services for the particular [MBS] item”.

The aim of this fact sheet is to advise on the relevant Victorian requirements.

Advice to Victorian Divisions of General Practice

According to The Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981 and Regulations 1995, a Division 1 registered nurse is able to provide immunisation services in the general practice setting when:

a) The Division 1 registered nurse is an accredited nurse immuniser. This nurse is able to both possess and administer the vaccine independently of the medical practitioner. The medical practitioner should be available to provide advice to the nurse on the use of the vaccine.

b) The nurse is a Division 1 registered nurse who is not an accredited nurse immuniser. This nurse must obtain verbal or written authorisation from the medical practitioner to access and administer the vaccine for each patient. There should be a written record of this authorisation, and that the patient has consented, for each patient vaccinated by the nurse. In case of an anaphylactic reaction the medical practitioner should be physically available.

Note that:

- “Off-site” immunisation can only be performed by an accredited nurse immuniser or by a Division 1 registered nurse (non-accredited nurse immuniser) who has the medical practitioner available on-site to sight the patient.

- Nurses are at all times accountable and responsible for their actions, and to be aware of the limits of their knowledge and competence, and to work within these limits.

It is expected that nurses providing immunisation services will have read the documents below; have a working knowledge of them; and be able to refer to them.

- “General statement for nurses undertaking clinical practice/procedures” from the Nurses Board of Victoria, at www.nbv.org.au under “Publications”

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