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Introduction
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Putting the puzzle together
The diagram below shows the basis of the application process. In the middle of the diagram are the components, derived from the Medicines Regulations 1984, to be assessed in every application for authorisation as an independent vaccinator. Around the outside of the diagram are the standard forms of evidence to be submitted to the Auckland Medical Officer of Health, in a written application, to assess whether each of the components are met. Page numbers provided refer to this Guide.

Notes
ARPHS Auckland Regional Public Health Service. www.arphs.govt.nz
IMAC Immunisation Advisory Centre, University of Auckland. www.immune.org.nz
MOH Medical Officer of Health
VTC Vaccinator Training Course
WONS Nursing, Education and Health Promotion service provider; provides vaccinator training. www.wons.org.nz
Background Information

Authorisation as an independent vaccinator gives you the legal ability to administer vaccines without requiring a prescription or standing order written by a medical practitioner.

Regulatory requirements

Regulation 44A of the Medicines Regulations 1984 ("the Regulations") gives the Medical Officer of Health the power to authorise an independent vaccinator following a written application. Documentary evidence must be provided showing that the applicant:

- can carry out basic emergency techniques including resuscitation and anaphylaxis treatment
- has knowledge of the safe and effective handling of immunisation products and equipment
- can demonstrate clinical inter-personal skills
- has sufficient knowledge of the relevant diseases and vaccines so that the patient, parent or guardian can give informed consent

The Regulations also state that authorisation is valid for a period of 2 years, is subject to conditions, and may be withdrawn at any time.

Terminology

The terms “non-medical vaccinator” and “certified vaccinator” are synonymous with authorised independent vaccinator.

Types and scope of authorisation

Based on your initial and ongoing training, you will be granted either (a) general authorisation, (b) adult vaccination authorisation, or (c) limited vaccine authorisation. The scopes of these authorisation types are as follows.

- Vaccinators with general authorisation can provide any immunisation services for which the vaccinator has appropriate competencies, in programmes approved either nationally or by the MOH.
- Vaccinators with adult vaccination authorisation can also provide any immunisation services for which the vaccinator has appropriate competencies, in programmes approved either nationally or by the MOH, excluding early childhood immunisation services.
- Vaccinators with limited vaccine authorisation can provide immunisation services only with vaccines for which they have been authorised by the MOH.
Prerequisites for authorisation
To be authorised as an independent vaccinator, you must hold a current Annual Practising Certificate from the Nursing Council of New Zealand within the registered nurse or registered midwife scope of practice. A copy of your current registration certificate (both sides, if card-sized) must be provided with your application. Current registration provides sufficient evidence that you meet the requirement to be able to carry out basic emergency techniques, and no further evidence of this is required with your application.

Knowledge and clinical skill requirements
The Regulations require applicants for authorisation to demonstrate that they have appropriate knowledge and clinical skills. Information required to assess whether you meet these requirements differs depending on whether you are currently or not currently authorised as an independent vaccinator. If you are currently authorised, turn to page 4. Otherwise, continue reading below.

Vaccinators who are not currently authorised
This section applies to you if you have never been authorised before, or if your last authorisation has expired (i.e. is more than two years old).

You will need to demonstrate that you have attended, completed and passed a vaccinator training course (VTC) appropriate to the type of authorisation you are seeking. The VTC must meet the IMAC Standards for Delivery of Vaccinator Training Courses and consist of all of the following:

• a minimum of 16 hours educational input (unless applying for ‘limited vaccines’ authorisation, in which a shorter duration VTC is acceptable)
• a written or oral test
• a clinical skills assessment

Additional assessment may be required depending on when your VTC was completed, as described below.

VTC completed less than two years ago
No further training or skills assessment is required. Submit a copy of your VTC certificate with your application. Continue reading at Immunisation Programmes (page 5).

VTC completed two or more years ago, and not currently authorised
You will need to provide further information to demonstrate that you have maintained your competency and skills in the years since your VTC. Along with the copy of your
initial VTC certificate, submit the following material with your application, if available:

- copies of certificates from any updates for trained vaccinators, or further VTCs, you have attended since your initial VTC
- evidence of any assessments undertaken of your clinical skills as a vaccinator.

This material will be used to assess your application. You may be required to undertake further training or skills assessment if this material is absent or inadequate. Continue reading at Immunisation Programmes (page 5) to find out about other requirements.

Vaccinators who are currently authorised

This section applies to you if you are currently authorised as an independent vaccinator. To renew your authorisation, you will need to demonstrate that you have (a) undertaken an update for trained vaccinators, and (b) performed a peer-reviewed self-assessment of your clinical practice as a vaccinator.

Updates for trained vaccinators

You will need to demonstrate that you have attended an update for trained vaccinators in the two years since last granted authorisation. The update should meet the IMAC standards for updates for trained vaccinators and consist of a minimum of 4 hours educational input.

Updates are only acceptable as a basis for renewal of authorisation if they have been approved by the MOH. Standard 4-hour updates provided by WONS or IMAC (including the IMAC online immunisation update course, www.icomet.org.nz) are routinely approved. Approval for updates provided by other agencies must be sought from the MOH. Attendance at other educational events related to vaccination is encouraged, but is not a substitute for a formal update.

Peer-reviewed self-assessment of clinical skills

Assessment of your clinical skills for renewal of your authorisation is in two parts.

- Firstly, undertake a self-assessment of your vaccination practice using the assessment form, available at www.arphs.govt.nz/vaccinator.asp. The components for this assessment are drawn from the vaccinator standards provided in the Immunisation Handbook. On completion, sign and date the form.
- Secondly, arrange for a peer to review your self-assessment and verify its accuracy. The peer-reviewer must have observed your vaccination practice in the preceding two years, and must also be an authorised independent vaccinator. The peer-reviewer must sign and date the assessment form.
Immunisation programmes

The Regulations state that authorisation as an independent vaccinator enables you to administer vaccines “for the purposes of an approved immunisation programme.” Publicly-funded vaccination services (defined in chapter 1.3 of the Immunisation Handbook 2006 and subsequent amendments—primarily, the National Immunisation Schedule) have been approved nationally by the Director-General of Health and do not need separate approval in Auckland. However, any other vaccination services you provide must have been approved by the Auckland MOH as local immunisation programmes. Local immunisation programmes that need approval by the Auckland MOH are those that:

- are not publicly-funded (as above), and
- are to be delivered in the Auckland region, and
- are to be delivered by one or more authorised independent vaccinator(s) working independently (i.e., without a prescription or standing order).

Examples of services that require approval as local immunisation programmes are:

- provision of influenza vaccine to healthy adults aged under 65 years
- provision of hepatitis A vaccination in an occupational health service

Applying to provide a local immunisation programme

If the services you are intending to provide meet the criteria above for a local immunisation programme, you will need to find out whether the service has already been approved by the Auckland MOH. To do this, ask your service manager or colleagues, or contact us.

Registering with a programme that is already approved

If the programme has already been approved, find out details of the programme (manager’s name, programme name, vaccines to be provided). Enter or update these details in your application form. You can register with multiple programmes.

Applying to deliver a new programme

If the immunisation service you are intending to provide is not an approved immunisation programme, an Application for Approval of an Immunisation Programme must be completed and submitted. You can attach this to your application, or arrange for your service manager to complete the application and submit it separately. You will not be registered to deliver this programme until it has been approved by the MOH. Provide details of the programme(s) in your application form (available from www.arphps.govt.nz/vaccinator).
Special applications

Currently authorised outside the Auckland region

If you are currently authorised outside the Auckland region and are applying for authorisation to practise as an independent vaccinator in Auckland, you will need to do the following:

• complete and submit an application form for authorisation
• provide details of any local immunisation programme(s) you will be providing in Auckland (or submit applications for programme approval by the Auckland MOH)
• provide a copy of your current authorisation letter or certificate issued outside Auckland

If your application is satisfactory, you will be granted authorisation until the expiry date on your current authorisation letter or certificate. Evidence of training or skills assessments is not required unless your current authorisation has expired or you are applying for authorisation for a full two year period.

Changes in vaccination practice during authorisation period

If an intended change in your vaccination practice is not covered by the scope of your current authorisation type, you must complete and submit a further application and provide evidence of completion of a full VTC appropriate to the new authorisation type. This is relevant only to vaccinators who hold ‘adult vaccination’ or ‘limited vaccine’ authorisation, particularly if the intended change in practice will involve providing early childhood vaccination services. In some cases, it may be possible to undertake a shorter bridging course instead of a full VTC: this should be discussed with the MOH.

No application is necessary if an intended change in vaccination practice is within your current authorisation type. However, at all times, vaccinators are responsible for ensuring that they have appropriate competencies to support any change in practice.
Complete your application form
All applicants for authorisation as independent vaccinators in Auckland need to complete and submit the ARPHS application form (available online at www.arphps.govt.nz/vaccinator). The following sections provide guidance for completing the form.

Section 1 - Name
This is the name that will be recorded on your authorisation certificate, and is the name we will use to contact you. It is your responsibility to advise us if you change your name before you are due to renew your authorisation.

Section 2 - Contact details
We will use these details to contact you regarding your authorisation. It is your responsibility to advise us if you change your address or other contact details.

Section 3 – Immunisation programmes
As described in Immunisation Programmes (page 5) you will need to provide details of all local immunisation programmes you are intending to provide that are not part of the National Immunisation Schedule.

Section 4 - Workforce survey
The objectives of the workforce survey are to obtain statistical information on the structure and trends in the independent vaccinator workforce. ARPHS owns the database and protects its confidentiality vigorously. We do not release unit data to the Ministry of Health or to other agencies, and information derived from the survey is not published where results show numbers less than four, to avoid identification of individual vaccinators. We strongly encourage you to complete the workforce survey questions fully, and thank you for your cooperation.

Section 5 - Declaration by applicant
Please ensure that you double check your details and the enclosures you provide with your application form.

Section 6 - Checklist
Annual Practising Certificate
If your Annual Practising Certificate is in a card-sized format, please ensure that you photocopy both sides to include with your application.
Vaccinator Training Course certificate
Provide a copy of your VTC certificate if applying for initial authorisation or change in authorisation type (see page 6).

Update certificate
Provide a copy of the certificate from your update for trained vaccinators if applying for renewal of your authorisation.

Peer-reviewed self-assessment of clinical skills form
If applying for renewal of your authorisation, complete a self-assessment of your clinical skills and have it peer reviewed by another authorised independent vaccinator. Provide with your application.

Authorisation certificate issued outside Auckland
If applying to transfer or extend your authorisation to the Auckland region, provide a copy of your existing authorisation certificate or letter.

Application for local immunisation programme approval
Include your application(s) for approval of a local immunisation programme, as described in Immunisation programmes.

Submitting your application
Submit your application as soon as possible after your VTC or update, for initial authorisation or renewal of authorisation respectively. If your application has been approved, you will be granted authorisation for two years commencing on the date on your VTC or update certificate.

Return completed application form and supporting documentation to:
Postal address:
Vaccinator Authorisation
Auckland Regional Public Health Service
Private Bag 92 605, Symonds street,
Auckland 1150
Fax number:
09 630 7431 (attn: Vaccinator Authorisation)

Help is available. If, after reading this guide and the application form you are still in doubt about how to complete this form or what is required, please telephone 09 623 4600. State that your inquiry concerns vaccinator authorisation. Our email address is vaccinator@adhb.govt.nz.