

## **Update April 2021**

### **COVID-19 response – Changes to vaccinator training and vaccinator processes**

As part of the New Zealand COVID-19 response it is essential that all immunisation vaccinations continue to be delivered including the influenza programme and on time national immunisation programme. The following information and advice is provided to help clarify the current situation and acknowledge the current challenges.

#### **1. Provisional Vaccinator Foundation Course (PVFC) and Provisional Authorised Vaccinator Process**

The PVFC and the Provisional Authorisation process continue to be available, alongside the standard IMAC Vaccinator Foundation Programme. Over 4,000 HCP have participated in the PVFC and many are awaiting opportunities to complete their peer assessment.

If you are looking for vaccinators for Influenza, MMR and COVID-19 (on completion of the COVID-19 vaccination module) please contact your local immunisation coordinator who can put you on contact with your local DHB workforce liaison person.

Provisionally authorised vaccinators are reminded that their authorisation will expire June 2022 and later this year and into 2022 there will be an opportunity to complete a bridging programme to become an Authorised Vaccinator, should you wish to continue vaccinating after June 2022.

#### **2. Vaccinators to be approved to vaccinate in any DHB**

All authorised, provisionally authorised and temporarily authorised vaccinators are approved to vaccinate anywhere in New Zealand through until June 2022 as part of the COVID-19 response. This will enable a more mobile workforce that can be readily assigned to the area of greatest need. IMAC will hold a register of all Provisionally or Temporarily authorised vaccinators and those who have completed the COVID-19 vaccination module for 2 years or until a national register of all vaccinators is available. The Ministry of Health is currently developing a national register as part of the COVID-19 response.

#### **3. CPR certificate**

Current authorised vaccinators, pharmacist vaccinators and registered intern pharmacists whose CPR certificate has recently expired are expected to complete an update CPR course as soon as practically possible. However, for the remainder of 2021, holding a current CPR certificate will not be a requirement by Pharmaceutical Society/ Medicines Control or

Medical Officers of Health. An exemption of 12 months from date of expiry will be given.

The course must meet the requirements outline in Appendix 4 of the Immunisation Handbook.

#### **4. Clinical Assessments**

Immunisation Coordinators (ICs) will focus on clinical assessments for pharmacists working as a solo pharmacist or in a pharmacy with no other pharmacist vaccinators and clinical assessments for influenza occupational health providers. For those working in primary care awaiting clinical assessment and authorisation, you need to ensure that the vaccines you administer are covered by standing orders or prescription until you are authorised.

All vaccinators who are unable to access a full clinical assessment have the option of completing a peer assessment by a current authorised vaccinator or experienced pharmacist vaccinator (at least 2 years vaccinating). Vaccinators who have undertaken a peer assessment only will be given a two-year temporary authorisation with requirement to have full assessment prior to expiry of the temporary authorisation. ICs will prioritise clinical assessments where peer review is not available. Completed peer assessment forms should be sent to IMAC who will issue a letter of temporary authorisation.

Where it is not possible for a provisional vaccinator to complete a peer assessment there is an option for them to complete a simulated assessment under the supervision of IMAC staff.

#### **5. Cold Chain Accreditation (CCA) and Cold Chain Compliance (CCC)**

Due to additional new immunisation providers setting up, there may be some delays in the CCA and CCC audit cycles. Any new immunisation providers CCA/CCC will take priority for the next 3 months.

All existing Immunisation service providers, who are due for CCA review, will need to complete a self-assessment form and email this with a record of their last 3 months' refrigerator temperature recordings to their local IC prior to their CCA expiring. A CCC may be issued for up to a maximum of 1 year, without a need to complete a site visit. The exception to this is vaccinating pharmacies whose cold chain is normally assessed through their annual Licence to Operate by Medicines Control.

For new immunisation providers, they will work with the local coordinators to ensure that they are meeting the requirements for CCC, if they are to become a permanent provider of immunisation services they will process through to CCA on meeting all the temperature monitoring requirements.