Summary

This summary should be read in conjunction with the Secretary Approval under regulation 5(3) Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2006, and the Approved Client Groups for Nurse Immunisers; both of these documents can be viewed at http://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/

The Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2006 is the mechanism by which Registered Nurses are approved to administer specified immunisations and can manage adverse reactions where there may not be a medical practitioner present. The service is provided to approved client groups in circumstances such as nurse-led immunisation services in local councils, general practice, hospitals, community health and occupational health services.

The Secretary Approval is applicable to a Registered Nurse who has completed a program of study. The nurse must meet the defined criteria in the Secretary Approval to practice.

The Secretary Approval is not applicable to Registered Nurses who have not completed a program of study but who may administer vaccines supplied under an individual prescription or under the direction (e.g. drug order) and supervision of a medical practitioner.

The Registered Nurse

A nurse who is registered in Division 1 of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia register who provides evidence to the employer of currency of competence and ongoing professional development in immunisation and who:

• On 30 June 2010 was registered in division 1 of the register of nurses endorsed under section 27A of the Health Professions Registration Act 2005 by the Nurses Board of Victoria in the approved area of practice – Immunisation.

Or

• Has satisfactorily completed the assessment of a nurse immuniser program recognised by the Chief Health Officer (Note 1).

Or

• Has satisfactorily completed a nurse immuniser program not recognised by the Chief Health Officer and has written confirmation from the program provider that at the time the program was completed, it was of equivalent standard to a program currently recognised by the Chief Health Officer.

Note 1: The nurse immuniser programs recognised by the Chief Health Officer are listed at http://health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/

Nurse immuniser programs of study

The Chief Health Officer has recognised a number of programs of study for Registered Nurses to become nurse immunisers. The programs of study include epidemiology of vaccine preventable disease, the role of immunisation in public health, the immunisation schedule, guidelines and policy relevant to the field. The list of recognised programs can be found at http://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/
The employer

The Immunisation competence: Guide for employers - For Registered Nurses immunising under a Secretary Approval (Regulation 5) provides information for employers (and employees) to meet their obligations when employing a Registered Nurse as a nurse immuniser. In addition the employer needs to consider the existing national and state immunisation policy and structures and legislation (including the requirements of a Poisons Control Plan where applicable that support this practice by Registered Nurses). The guide can be found at http://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/

The employer and employee responsibilities

- The storage of each vaccine is at all times undertaken in accordance with the procedures specified in the National vaccine storage guidelines: Strive for 5.
- An immunisation assessment for an individual is at all times undertaken in accordance with the procedures specified in the current edition of The Australian Immunisation Handbook.
- An emergency kit containing adrenaline injection 1:1000, and, a written protocol for the treatment of anaphylaxis, including adrenaline use is available for each vaccination occasion of service. Administration of adrenaline is at all times undertaken in accordance with the procedures specified in the current edition of The Australian Immunisation Handbook.
- The Registered Nurse reports any Adverse Event Following Immunisation (AEFI) to the Surveillance of Adverse Events Following Vaccination in the Community (SAEFVIC). All notifications of an AEFI must be reported to SAEFVIC.
- The Registered Nurse has access to a medical practitioner for advice.
- The Registered Nurse must annually review best practice policy for immunisation. This may include, but is not limited to, attendance at updates or seminars on current practices, and proficiency in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation.