

10 March 2025

## **Annual Director-General approval of the Influenza Immunisation Programme is no longer required**

The annual Influenza Immunisation Programme (the Programme) runs from 1 April to 30 September each year.

In the past, the Director-General of Health has authorised the Programme as an *approved immunisation programme* under regulation 44A of the Medicines Regulations 1984. This approval has enabled non-prescribing vaccinators to administer influenza vaccine without a prescription where it is being administered under the Programme.

In 2022, the Influenza vaccine classification (item 1090) was updated in [Schedule 1 of the Medicine Regulations 1984](#). We consulted with the Public Health Agency in January 2025 on the interpretation of this classification and agreed that this change allows vaccinators, including registered pharmacists and registered intern pharmacists, who have successfully completed the Vaccinator Foundation Course and meet the specified requirements, to administer the influenza vaccine without a prescription. Consequently, Director-General approval of the Programme under regulation 44A is no longer required.

### **What does this mean for vaccinators administering influenza vaccine in 2025?**

This means that authorised vaccinators, pharmacist vaccinators and intern pharmacist vaccinators who have completed the Vaccinator Foundation Course, or an equivalent course approved by the Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora (Ministry of Health), can administer both funded and privately purchased influenza vaccines without a prescription or standing order. Vaccinators must comply with the immunisation standards of the Ministry of Health.

The 2025 influenza immunisation season officially starts on Tuesday, April 1st. Although vaccinators can administer influenza vaccines at any time, we strongly recommend vaccinators prioritise delivery from March 31st – 30 September. As soon as the influenza vaccine becomes available, we encourage offering the funded influenza vaccine to all pregnant people to protect both māmā and pēpi.

Healthcare workers are a priority group for vaccination against influenza. Immunising healthcare workers is crucial to protect them from illness, ensure the continuity of healthcare services, and prevent the transmission of influenza to vulnerable patients including those who are pregnant or immunocompromised. Free influenza vaccination will be available for Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora (Health NZ) employees. Reimbursement for the vaccination of patient-facing staff against influenza will also be available for employers of non-Health NZ health and disability workers through the [Flu Reimbursement Portal](#).

There is an additional co-payment when influenza vaccine and Boostrix (Tdap) vaccines are co-administered to hapū māmā. With the current pertussis epidemic in Aotearoa New Zealand, it is important to take the opportunity to check that everyone, including pregnant people, are up to date with their Boostrix (Tdap) vaccination when they present for an influenza vaccine.

Please share this message with your networks and thank you for your support with the 2025 Influenza Immunisation Programme.

Ngā mihi,



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