

Wednesday 23 June 2021

Tēnā koe e te rangatira

Together we are delivering the largest vaccine and immunisation programme in the history of Aotearoa New Zealand. We need a large team to help protect us and keep the country safe as our health workforces get even busier over winter.

You've told us that you need more resources to meet the demand of vaccinating over 3.5 million people from July 2021. We also know that we need to change the dynamic of the people available in the Vaccinator pipeline, in particular the number of Māori and Pacific people. It is critical to have the right people in the right places with availability to work and reflect the communities that we serve.

Changes to the Medicines Regulations 1984 are now in effect. [The new regulation 44AB](#) will enable a larger, more diverse pool of potential COVID-19 Vaccinators. As a health services employer, you play a critical role in ensuring this new workforce is set up to succeed and ultimately contribute to the success of the entire vaccination programme.

Making the most of the COVID-19 Vaccinator workforce will require a new approach and deliberate way of planning for services in your area. The Ministry will continue to do everything practicable to support you in this endeavour and will communicate regularly and in good faith. Similarly, we trust you will continue to communicate with and support commissioned providers through the process.

When mobilising the COVID-19 Vaccinator workforce, considerations for employers include:

- Adhering to updated **COVID-19 Immunisation Service Standards** and **operating guidelines**.
- Prioritising applications from **Māori** and **Pacific** candidates.
- **The service delivery model**. For example, COVID-19 Vaccinators will likely be more suited to larger sites.
- Ensuring the daily **staff profile** by experience, skill and qualification **matches expected consumer needs** and the constraints of the site arrangements.
- The **ratio** of supervisors to COVID-19 Vaccinators. Supervisors can have oversight of up to six (6) COVID-19 Vaccinators. A smaller ratio may be preferable at the start, based on staff skills and experience.
- **Standing orders**, which will be required while COVID-19 Vaccinators are undertaking the practical, supervised component of their training and assessment.
- Ensuring processes are in place for registered health professionals to **document consumers' informed consent** decisions and for COVID-19 Vaccinators **to sight and reconfirm consent**.
- Identifying Vaccination Clinical **Supervisors before assigning** COVID-19 Vaccinators.
- Clinical supervision and support for COVID-19 Vaccinators during the supervised practice and competency assessment portion of their training. Supervision during this period may be from any authorised vaccinator working on site but assessments should be conducted by a fully authorised vaccinator with at least two years' experience
- Ensuring your workforce have appropriate **indemnity insurance**.

Potential health workers can now be identified by DHBs and their commissioned providers and training is available now. People can be rostered once they successfully complete the training and are assessed as competent.

Further background on the new workforce and what it means to you as an employer is outlined in the attached appendix. A series of resources are being developed to support you and your teams and we will continue to respond to feedback to ensure the resources are fit for purpose.

The Ministry is working through ways to support employers with access to and funding for CPR courses where required. This will be communicated as soon as possible.

We remain committed, as always, to supporting the excellent work you and your teams are doing to make the COVID-19 vaccination and immunisation programme successful, for your teams and for Aotearoa New Zealand.

Ngā mihi maioha



Fiona Michel

Director, Sector Engagement, Workforce and Welfare
COVID-19 Vaccination and Immunisation Programme

Appendix A:

Overview of COVID-19 Vaccinator workforce and employer considerations

What is a COVID-19 Vaccinator and what are their responsibilities?

A COVID-19 Vaccinator will administer the COVID-19 vaccine to pre-assessed and pre-consented health consumers and can participate in post-vaccine observation, under the supervision and direction of a qualified, experienced health professional.

The COVID-19 Vaccinator will receive comprehensive training both online and in face-to-face practical sessions and will have undergone an onsite assessment to meet competency to administer the COVID-19 vaccine. Their training includes:

- Online COVID-19 vaccine training module, followed by a graded theory assessment
- Face-to-face practical training session with the Immunisation Advisory Centre (IMAC) trainers
- Observation and competency assessment in the workplace under the guidance of a supervisor

- Site-specific orientation and induction
- COVID-19 Immunisation Register (CIR) training
- CPR and anaphylaxis training.

Who is the new workforce?

COVID-19 Vaccinators

We anticipate people such as healthcare assistants, kaiāwhina, kaiārahi, kaimanaaki and pharmacy technicians filling these roles, as well as healthcare professionals trained in New Zealand or overseas who are not currently registered in New Zealand under the HPCA Act and who do not hold a practising certificate.

Candidates will complete a series of steps such as training, assessment, orientation and must pass a practical assessment prior to becoming a COVID-19 Vaccinator.

Clinical supervisors

Vaccination Clinical Supervisors will supervise and lead a team of up to six COVID-19 Vaccinators to safely and effectively administer the COVID-19 vaccine. Supervisors must be an experienced, registered health professional (typically an authorised Vaccinator), ideally with two years' experience in a vaccination or immunisation healthcare setting or equivalent recent experience relevant to the provision of the vaccination programme.

It is expected that supervisors are not simultaneously responsible for any other roles or processes while supervising COVID-19 Vaccinators.

Finding potential COVID-19 Vaccinators

There are multiple employment pathways to becoming a COVID-19 Vaccinator. This may include:

- Current employees who want to upskill can put their hand up to their employer
- People who register their interest via the Hands Up to join our vaccination teams database
- Local or regional recruitment campaigns.

In all cases, applications from Māori and Pacific candidates and candidates who otherwise reflect the local community should be prioritised.

Job specifications are provided to help you create appropriate position descriptions.

Training pathway for the COVID-19 Vaccinator

The training to become a COVID-19 Vaccinator consists of an online COVID-19 Vaccinator training module, a CIR online training module, face-to-face practical session led by IMAC trainers, onsite direct supervised practice, and a final assessment of skill and cultural competency.

In the first instance, COVID-19 Vaccinators will only be trained to fulfil the following elements of reg 44(AB) of the Medicines Regulations 1984:

- The administration of the COVID-19 vaccine

- Basic emergency techniques including resuscitation and the treatment of anaphylaxis; and
- Safe and effective handling of immunisation products and equipment.

Refer to the resource 'Training and authorisation pathway for COVID-19 Vaccinators' for more information.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

All COVID-19 Vaccinators must be trained in basic life support including resuscitation and the treatment of anaphylaxis prior to working as COVID-19 Vaccinator. It's expected that more experienced personnel on site would take the lead if life support interventions are necessary.

Because the in-person practical session delivered by IMAC will cover the recognition and treatment of anaphylaxis, anyone who does not have a current CPR certificate can go through a reputable provider to complete a basic life skills/CPR course.

Core learning

If they haven't already, COVID-19 Vaccinators must also complete other core learning modules through their employer, such as Te Tiriti o Waitangi, tikanga/kawa Māori, the Health Information Privacy Code, the Code of Health & Disability Services Consumer Rights and how to work with disabled people.

Preparing the vaccine

At this stage, COVID-19 Vaccinators will not prepare (draw up and dilute) the vaccine. The regulations do enable this but as of 14 June 2021, it will not form part of the training. Until it does, COVID-19 Vaccinators will not perform this task. This may be revisited in the future and Ministry-approved training will be delivered. Employers do not have the discretion to introduce this task without Ministry approval.

Employer accountability

Employers are ultimately accountable for service delivery, quality and safety.

This includes:

- Having an appropriately trained and resourced workforce who reflects the community

- Ensuring appropriately trained and certified staff
 1. prepare the vaccine
 2. administer the vaccine
- Having processes in place to identify, respond to and learn from adverse events.

Employers must ensure the daily staff profile by experience, skill and qualification matches expected consumer needs and the constraints of the site arrangements.

Employers are expected to ensure that all COVID-19 Vaccinators and Vaccination Clinical Supervisors have indemnity insurance and may choose to provide this cover to their employees.

Employee responsibility

Vaccination Clinical Supervisors

Supervisors are responsible for providing direction and guidance to the worker to ensure their consistently competent practice.

Supervision and direction in this context is based on definitions provided in Nursing Council's Guideline: Delegation of care by a registered nurse to a health care assistant. It incorporates direction and guidance in the handling and administration of the COVID-19 vaccination, and post-administration observation. It is a formal process of professional and clinical support which supports a COVID-19 Vaccinator to:

- maintain competence,
- perform the tasks they are authorised to do under [Medicines Regulations 1984 44AB](#),
- assume responsibility for their own practice, and
- enhance public protection and safety.

Supervision may be direct or indirect according to the nature of the context under which the practice is being supervised.

Supervisors must be immediately available for reasonable access, i.e. must always be available on the premises.

COVID-19 Vaccinators

Each COVID-19 Vaccinator has a responsibility to work within the limits of their competence while performing the tasks under Regulations 44(AB) and to follow the direction of their Vaccination Clinical Supervisor.

They have responsibility to adhere to the terms of their employment contract and to all systems, policies, processes and frameworks set out by their employer.

Consumer protection

If a personal injury is caused to a health consumer as a result of COVID-19 vaccination administered by a COVID-19 Vaccinator who is acting at the direction of a registered health professional as required, the consumer will be covered by ACC treatment injury provisions.

Resources to support employers

Resources will be available to support employers to take on board this new health workforce.

We suggest you regularly check the webpage [COVID-19: Vaccine information for health professionals](#) for current operating guidelines, Immunisation handbook and links to IMAC training information.

Other resources include fact sheets for the COVID-19 Vaccinator and supervisor roles, a fact sheet on the COVID-19 Vaccinator role, job specifications for inclusion in job descriptions, and IMAC webinars for potential supervisors.

The recently improved Hands Up to join our vaccination team's database (formerly the surge database), is also a helpful tool, with improved visibility and reporting ability. Visit www.health.govt.nz/HandsUp to find out more.

Activating the COVID-19 Vaccinator workforce

Once you have confirmed candidates for your COVID-19 Vaccinator roles, liaise with your [COVID-19 Regional Immunisation Advisor](#) to arrange training.

COVID-19 vaccine: Become a COVID-19 Vaccinator

About the COVID-19 Vaccinator role

Train to become a COVID-19 Vaccinator, which is a new health workforce role working in a COVID-19 vaccination team.

You would administer the COVID-19 vaccine under the supervision and direction of an experienced, qualified health professional in an approved vaccination site.

Why is the COVID-19 Vaccinator role important?

We're delivering the largest vaccine and immunisation programme in the history of Aotearoa New Zealand. We need to expand our vaccination workforce to roll out the COVID-19 vaccine to help New Zealand reach community immunity.

It's important we have the right people in the right places at the right time to work in our vaccination sites and reflect the communities that we serve. This includes having more Māori and Pacific people trained to vaccinate.

Who can become a COVID-19 Vaccinator?

You may be a healthcare assistant, kaiāwhina, kaiarahi, kaimanaaki or pharmacy technician. Or, you could be a healthcare professional trained in New Zealand, or overseas, but are not registered in New Zealand and don't currently hold a practising certificate.

You will take part in thorough training and must pass theory and practical assessments to become a COVID-19 Vaccinator.

What training is required for the role?

COVID-19 Vaccinators will undergo thorough training, developed by the Immunisation Advisory Centre (IMAC) and CareerForce and approved by the Ministry of Health.

Training is free and is available now.

The training includes:

- Two to three hours online training, followed by a graded theory assessment
- Face-to-face practical training
- Observation and assessment in the workplace under the guidance of a supervisor
- Site-specific orientation and induction.

Your employer will also ensure you complete CPR training, as well as core learning about Te Tiriti o Waitangi and tikanga/kawa Māori, the Health Information Privacy Code and how to work with disabled people.

A day in the life of the COVID-19 Vaccinator

As a COVID-19 Vaccinator, you will be part of a COVID-19 vaccination Team and will do some or all of the following:

- Greeting people arriving at the vaccination centre for vaccination
- Providing culturally appropriate support to consumers and uphold the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- Answering basic questions about the COVID-19 vaccine

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- Confirming they are happy to proceed with the vaccine (formal consent will be discussed with a registered health professional)
- Giving the vaccine to triaged people with a low risk of adverse reaction to the vaccine
- Completing required documentation
- Providing support and information for consumers following the vaccine.

There will always be a qualified, experienced clinical supervisor available on site.

If you have completed any other Immunisation Support Worker Modules, you might also help with those activities.

What will COVID-19 Vaccinators be paid?

If you are hired by a District Health Board (DHB) or Contracted Health Provider specifically to undertake a dedicated COVID-19 Vaccinator role, we expect you to be covered by one of the existing Multiple Employer Collective Agreements (MECAs) or equivalent Individual Employment Agreement (IEA).

Remuneration will be in line with rates applicable to similar roles within those DHB agreements.

If you train to be a COVID-19 Vaccinator as part of an existing role you perform, you or your union will negotiate any changes to your terms, conditions and remuneration with your employer.

Keen to get involved?

If you're interested in becoming a COVID-19 Vaccinator but don't have an employment contract now, go online to www.health.govt.nz/HandsUp and fill in a form to register your interest.

The registration form asks about your health sector experience, availability and the languages you speak. It can be completed in English, Te Reo Māori, Samoan or Tongan.

If you're already employed by an organisation who has a DHB commissioned contract to deliver the COVID-19 vaccine, talk to your employer. They will put suitable candidates forward to IMAC to undertake the COVID-19 vaccination training.

What happens next?

Your registration of interest will be sent to your local DHB. They'll match the roles to people based on skills, availability and the needs of their communities.

Thank you for your patience as the DHBs work through the process to ensure we have the right people in the right places.

Supporting other vaccination programmes

Unless specifically authorised to administer other vaccines, COVID-19 Vaccinators will only be able to administer the COVID-19 vaccine. This authorisation is until 1 June 2023.

There are also other modules the COVID-19 Vaccinator could complete as part of the immunisation support worker role including:

- Introduction to immunisation
- Conversations about vaccinations
- National Immunisation Programme cold chain management
- Post vaccination observation under the support of a healthcare professional.

This training is online with webinar support and final workplace workbook signoff.

COVID-19 vaccine: Become a COVID-19 Vaccination Clinical Supervisor

Why is the Vaccination Clinical Supervisor role important?

We're delivering the largest vaccine and immunisation programme in the history of Aotearoa New Zealand. We're expanding the vaccination team to safely and effectively deliver the COVID-19 vaccine and help New Zealand reach community immunity.

As a Vaccination Clinical Supervisor you would be a clinical leader who supports and directs COVID-19 Vaccinators. This is a meaningful leadership and development opportunity for qualified, experienced health professionals.

What is a COVID-19 Vaccinator and what are their responsibilities?

A COVID-19 Vaccinator will administer the COVID-19 vaccine to pre-assessed and pre-consented health consumers and can participate in post-vaccine observation, under the supervision and direction of a qualified, experienced health professional.

COVID-19 Vaccinators will receive comprehensive training both online and in face-to-face practical sessions. They will complete an onsite assessment to meet competency to administer the COVID-19 vaccine. Their training includes:

- Online COVID-19 vaccine training module, followed by a graded theory assessment
- Face-to-face practical training session with IMAC trainers
- Observation and competency assessment in the workplace under the guidance of a supervisor
- Site-specific orientation and induction
- CIR use and documentation
- CPR and anaphylaxis training.

Who can become a Vaccination Clinical Supervisor?

It's important that experienced, registered health professionals provide supervision and direction to COVID-19 Vaccinators to help ensure their competent practice.

Vaccination Clinical Supervisors will:

- Be a fully authorised vaccinator, ideally with two years' recent experience in a healthcare setting; or
- Be a registered healthcare professional who is authorised to vaccinate and has recent experience that is relevant to the vaccination programme, for example immunisation and vaccination healthcare or emergency care.
- Vaccination Clinical Supervisors will also have completed both the IMAC online COVID-19 Vaccinator and COVID-19 Immunisation Register (CIR) training modules.

A day in the life of a Vaccination Clinical Supervisor

As a Vaccination Clinical Supervisor, you'll need to understand the role and responsibilities of a COVID-19 Vaccinator. You would also:

Provide professional and clinical direction and guidance for a team of up to six COVID-19 Vaccinators to safely and effectively administer the COVID-19 vaccine.

- Provide professional and clinical advice and guidance to facilitate best care for the health consumer.
- Provide culturally appropriate leadership and support and uphold the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi

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- Be immediately available to support the COVID-19 Vaccinator in the event of an adverse reaction
- Escalate concerns beyond your knowledge and scope to appropriate clinical or operational leads
- Provide support for the onsite training and competency assessment of the newly trained COVID-19 Vaccinators.

Employer Accountability

Employers are ultimately accountable for service delivery, quality and safety.

This includes:

- Having an appropriately trained and resourced workforce that reflects the community
- Ensuring the vaccine is prepared and administered by appropriately trained and certified staff, and
- Having processes in place to identify, respond to and learn from adverse events.

Employers must ensure the daily staff profile by experience, skill and qualification matches expected consumer needs and the constraints of the site arrangements.

Employers are expected to ensure that all COVID-19 Vaccinators and Vaccination Clinical Supervisors have indemnity insurance and may choose to provide this cover to their employees.

Employee Responsibility

Vaccination Clinical Supervisors

Supervision includes direction and guidance in the handling and administration of the COVID-19 vaccination, and post-administration observation. It's a formal process of professional and clinical support which supports a COVID-19 Vaccinator to ensure their competent practice.

Supervisors must be immediately available for reasonable access, i.e. must always be available on the premises.

You would have responsibility to adhere to the terms of your employment contract and to all systems, policies, processes and frameworks set out by your employer. This includes effective oversight of employees you supervise.

COVID-19 Vaccinators

COVID-19 Vaccinators have a responsibility to work within the limits of their competence while performing the tasks under Regulations 44(AB), and to follow the direction of their Vaccination Clinical Supervisor.

They have responsibility to adhere to the terms of their employment contract and to all systems, policies, processes and frameworks set out by their employer.

Consumer protection

If a personal injury is caused to a health consumer as a result of COVID-19 vaccination administered by a COVID-19 Vaccinator who is acting at the direction of a registered health professional as required, the consumer will be covered by ACC treatment injury provisions.

Keen to get involved?

If you're interested in putting your hand up to take on this important leadership opportunity talk to your employer.

Remuneration will be in line with rates applicable to similar roles within Multiple Employer Collective Agreements (MECAs) or Individual Employment Agreements (IEAs) agreements.

IMAC will run informational webinars for people who are interested in supervising COVID-19 Vaccinators. These webinars will be advertised through employers.