



First Nations & Inuit Health Branch

Alberta Region

Policy Number: {xxx}

Nursing Policies & Guidelines

Section: **Nursing Education**

Subject: **Mandatory Inoculist Certification and Re-certification Program**

Distribution: **All Nursing Facilities**

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Approved by: _____ Dr. Wadieh Yacoub, Senior Medical Officer of Health _____ (Name), Director of Nursing	Effective Date: 2020 Through COVID-19 response to 2022

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide information to community health nurses (CHNs), nation-employed nurses, and contracted healthcare professionals (CHCPs) who work for First Nations Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) Alberta Region on the Inoculist Certification Program, the training prerequisites, and the competency requirements needed to provide immunization services.

Principles:

- To standardize practices for all immunization providers (CHNs, nation-employed nurses, and CHCPs) and support them in making informed clinical decisions.
- To ensure that immunization providers achieve and maintain the recommended standards of knowledge, competence, and skill for the provision of immunization services based on Public Health Agency of Canada’s (PHAC) immunization competencies and national guidelines.
- To equip immunization providers with the necessary, current, and evidence-based knowledge needed to provide safe, effective, and competent care to individuals residing in First Nation communities.

1. Policy Statement:

All community health nurses, nation-employed nurses, and contracted healthcare professionals regardless of their tenure, job title, or work setting, who provide routine immunization services and administer vaccines, as a work requirement must:

- 1.1 Complete the mandatory Inoculist Certification Program,
- 1.2 Hold a current Inoculist Certificate, and
- 1.3 Re-certify every 3 years



2. Policy Guidelines:

2.1 Authorized Immunization Providers

2.1.1 Routine vaccinations shall be administered by a healthcare professional (HCP) who:

- a) Is a regulated member of a health profession body under the Health Professions Act (Alberta) or is a registered member of a designated health discipline under the Health Disciplines Act (Alberta),
- b) Is authorized under the respective statute and regulations to administer the specific vaccines,
- c) Practices within their scope of practice,
- d) Adheres to their profession's Standards of Practice, and
- e) Follows FNIHB Policies and Procedures

2.1.2 Registered Nurses (RNs) and Nurse Practitioners (NPs) may administer vaccines according to the Health Professions Act (Alberta) section under 15 (1) (f), but they need to:

- a) Complete the Inoculist Certification Program or at a minimum the annual FNIHB CDC Influenza Training, if they are only administering the influenza and/or pneumococcal vaccines to eligible clients, and
- b) Follow their standards of practice for authorized restricted activities

2.1.3 Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) may administer vaccines according to the Health Professions Act (Alberta) section under 13 (1) (c), but they need to:

- a) Complete the Inoculist Certification Program or at a minimum the annual FNIHB CDC Influenza Training, if they are only administering the influenza and/or pneumococcal vaccines to eligible clients,
- b) Follow their standards of practice for authorized restricted activities, and
- c) Ensure the recipient of the immunization is 5 years of age or older

2.1.4 Primary Care Paramedics (PCPs) and Advanced Care Paramedics (ACPs) may administer vaccines according to the Health Professions Act (Alberta) under section 16 (2) (f), but they need to:

- a) Complete the Inoculist Certification Program or at minimum the annual FNIHB CDC Influenza Training, if they are only administering the influenza and/or pneumococcal vaccines to clients,
- b) Follow their standards of practice/protocol for authorized restricted activities, and
- c) Have an inoculist certified preceptor or practitioner on site and available to provide assistance and direction, if required.

2.2 Competency Requirements

2.2.1 The Inoculist Certification Program consists of two components:

- a) Part A – the self-study open book exercise and written exam
- b) Part B – the competency skills assessment

2.2.2 In order to obtain the Inoculist certificate for a record of completion, the HCP must:

- a) Review the following resources:



- i) Government of Canada – Canadian Immunization Guide
 - ii) Government of Canada – Canadian Tuberculosis Standards
 - iii) FNIHB – Alberta Region Policy and Procedure Manual
 - iv) NIHB – Alberta Region Community Health Manual
- b) Demonstrate an understanding of the material by attaining 85% on the written exam
- c) Complete the competency skills assessment with an inoculist certified preceptor in the work environment

Please note: At this time, the Nursing Department at FNIHB Alberta Region does not recognize public health immunization training from other organizations.

2.2.3 In order to be an inoculist certified preceptor or practitioner, the HCP must:

- a) Be a registered nurse or nurse practitioner with an active license with the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta,
- b) Have completed the FNIHB Inoculist Certification Program, and
- c) Have at minimum one year of recent experience (within the last 3 years) providing immunizations.

2.3 Immunization Provider Responsibilities

2.3.1 In order to provide routine immunization services and administer the respective vaccines, the HCP must complete:

- a) Part A of the Inoculist Certification Program within 3 months of commencing employment with FNIHB-AB Region, and
- b) Part B of the Inoculist Certification Program within 3 months of completing Part A or upon the discretion of the Nursing Education Department at FNIHB-AB Region

2.3.2 LPNs, RNs, and NPs, working in primary care, must:

- a) Complete Part A of the Inoculist Certification Program, and
- b) Complete Part B of the Adult only competency skills assessment

2.3.3 LPNs, RNs, and NPs, working in home and community care and public health, who provide immunizations in a dual role must:

- a) Complete Part A of the Inoculist Certification Program, and
- b) Complete Part B of the Inoculist Certification Program

2.3.4 LPNs, RNs, and NPs, working in primary care or home care, who only provide Td/dTAP immunization services and the respective vaccines must:

- a) Complete Part A of the Inoculist Certification Program
- b) View the Td/dTAP Presentation, and
- c) Complete Part B of the Adult only competency skills assessment

2.3.5 HCPs, regardless of their tenure, job title, or work setting as long as it is within their scope of practice, who only provide influenza and pneumococcal immunization services and administer the corresponding vaccines, must:



- a) Complete the annual FNIHB CDC Influenza Training

2.3.6 HCPs may be exempted from the Inoculist Certification Program due to the following conditions:

- a) If at the discretion of the zone nurse manager or regional nurse educator, they have determined that the HCP's work related duties do not require or involve the vaccination of clients, or
- b) If the HCP is only providing influenza and pneumococcal immunization services, and have attended the annual FNIHB CDC Influenza Training

2.3.7 HCPs must understand their own fitness to practice when performing restricted activities and to limit to performing activities:

- a) That they are competent to perform,
- b) That are appropriate to their area of practice,
- c) That are appropriate to the procedures being performed, and
- d) That are in accordance with the Standards of Practice

2.3.8 After the completion of the Inoculist Certification Program, the HCP shall have the knowledge and understanding of the following concepts:

- a) Client assessment (e.g. fit to immunize and eligibility)
- b) Informed consent
- c) Infection prevention and control practices (e.g. hand hygiene, safe disposal of sharps)
- d) Vaccine information (e.g. actions, interactions, side effects, risks, benefits, contraindications, appropriate dosages, schedules, and expiry dates)
- e) Procedures for anaphylaxis, vaccine-related adverse events, and immunization errors
- f) Vaccine administration
- g) Vaccine management (e.g. storage, handling, and transporting of vaccines)
- h) Client management (e.g. monitoring of the client during and following vaccine administration, managing side effects, or adverse effects of the vaccine), and
- i) Documentation and reporting

2.4 Organizational Responsibilities

2.4.1 Provision of routine, influenza, and pneumococcal immunization services and respective vaccine administration will be performed under the authority of the FNIHB Medical Officer of Health (MOH).

2.4.2 The Zone Nurse Manager or Nurse-in-Charge is responsible for:

- a) Identifying eligible HCPs to complete the Inoculist Certification Program, and
- b) Advising the Regional Nursing Education administrative assistant of the HCPs eligibility

2.4.3 The Nursing Education Team at FNIHB-AB Region is responsible for:

- a) Administering orientation to and providing electronic access to Part A of the Inoculist Certification Program,



- b) Organizing the clinical preceptorship and competency skills assessment for Part B of the Inoculist Certification Program,
- c) Storing and archiving the HCP's inoculist certification, and
- d) Providing any necessary follow-up with the HCP

2.4.4 The Communicable Disease Control Team at FNIHB-AB Region is responsible for:

- a) Establishing schedules and standards for immunization programs,
- b) Ensuring immunization-related tools and resources are current,
- c) Administering immunization training updates, and
- d) Providing consultation to community health staff

2.5 Re-certification

2.5.1 HCPs are required to re-certify every 3 years by completing Part B of the Inoculist Immunization Program. In addition, HCPs will need to demonstrate that they are up-to-date with practice changes and understand current procedures. As an option, HCPs can choose to take Part A of the Inoculist Immunization Program, if a refresher is required.

2.5.2 HCPs must start the re-certification process prior to the expiry date.

2.5.3 HCPs have a grace period of 4 months after the expiry date to complete the re-certification. If the grace period is passed and the HCP's certificate is expired then he/she will need to complete both Part A and B of the Inoculist Immunization Program.

3. Related Policy and Policy Support Documents:

- 3.1 FNIHB: Mandatory Education Policy (National and Regional) for Primary Care Nurses
- 3.2 FNIHB: Alberta Region Policy and Procedure Manual
- 3.3 Government of Canada: Canadian Immunization Guide
- 3.4 Government of Canada: Canadian Tuberculosis Standards
- 3.5 Government of Canada: National Guidelines for Immunization Practices
- 3.6 NIHB: Alberta Region Community Health Manual



Definitions:

Advanced care paramedic (ACP): refers to a healthcare professional who is trained in paramedicine to perform advanced techniques, controlled or delegated medical acts, and implement treatment measures to manage life-threatening problems that affect the patient. They may work in rural, suburban, urban, and industrial communities.

Client: refers to a person that is a recipient of a service provided by a regulated healthcare professional. This is interchangeably used with the word patient.

Community health nurses (CHNs): may include licensed practical nurses (LPNs), registered nurses (RNs), and nurse practitioners (NPs) that are employed in a primary care and public health role within First Nations and Inuit communities in nursing stations, health centers, or clinics.

Competence: means that the individual has the requisite knowledge, skills, judgment, and abilities to perform a specific action or procedure safely, effectively, and ethically.

Contracted healthcare professionals (CHCPs): refers to a healthcare professional whose service is contracted by FNIHB. This may include paramedics.

FNIHB Medical Officer of Health (MOH): is a physician who specializes in public health. The MOH is responsible for the protection and promotion of community health and the control and prevention of communicable diseases. The MOH has delegated authority under the Public Health Act and public health agencies for the purposes of communicable disease control.

Healthcare professional (HCP): refers an individual who is a member of a regulated health discipline defined by the Health Professions Act (Alberta) and/or Health Disciplines Act (Alberta), and who practices within their scope and role. This may refer to registered nurses, nurse practitioners, licensed practical nurses, and primary care and advanced care paramedics.

Immunization services: refers to the different steps in the immunization process such as but not limited to assessing the client's eligibility and fit to immunize, providing client information on the vaccine (e.g. the purpose, actions, risks, benefits, potential side effects), administering the vaccine, storing/handling/transporting the vaccine, monitoring the client during and following the vaccine, managing side effects of the vaccine, documenting, and reporting any adverse effects.

The Inoculist Certification Program: refers to the immunization program administered by the Nursing Education Department at FNIHB-AB Region to ensure that healthcare professionals have the theory-based knowledge and clinical skills to provide immunization services to eligible clients. The program consists of two components:

- a) Part A – the self-study open book exercise and written exam
- b) Part B – the competency skills assessment



Inoculist certified preceptor: refers to a healthcare professional (e.g. registered nurse, nurse practitioner, or usually a public health nurse advisor or practice consultant) who is authorized to perform the restricted activity being learned (e.g. administration of vaccines), knowledgeable in the theory, have the demonstrated psychomotor skills, and is available to provide assistance when required.

Primary care paramedic (PCP): refers to a healthcare professional who is trained in paramedicine to perform primary care assessment, controlled, or delegated medical acts, and implement treatment measures (e.g. intravenous cannulation and administer medications) to manage problems that affect the patient. They may work in remote, rural, suburban, urban, and industrial communities.

Restricted Activity: refer to acts that could cause harm if it is performed by someone who does not have the knowledge, skill, and judgment to perform them. In order for a healthcare provider to perform a controlled act, the task or procedure must:

- a) Be delegated from another regulated healthcare professional who is authorized to perform and delegate this act;
- b) Be within the healthcare provider's scope of practice; and
- c) Meet certain conditions as outlined in healthcare providers' practice standards, Code of Ethics, legislations, regulations, policies, and procedures that inform their professional practice.

Vaccine administration: refers to the psychomotor task of giving an injection to an eligible client.



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