

Position statement

October 2016

Nurses, midwives and vaccination

Introduction

The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme ([the National Scheme](#)) for health practitioners in Australia commenced on 1 July 2010 under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act ([the National Law](#)) as in force in each state and territory.

Under the National Law, the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (National Board/ NMBA) is responsible for the regulation of the nursing and midwifery professions, and is supported in this role by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

The National Board has approved registration standards, codes and guidelines and competency standards that define the National Board expectations whilst guiding the professional practice of nurses and midwives in Australia.

NMBA position on nurses, midwives and vaccination

The NMBA has become aware that there are a small number of registered nurses, enrolled nurses and midwives who are promoting anti-vaccination statements to patients and the public via social media which contradict the best available scientific evidence. The NMBA is taking this opportunity to make its expectations about providing advice on vaccinations clear to registered nurses, enrolled nurses and midwives.

The NMBA recognises the Australian National Immunisation Handbook 10th edition as providing evidence-based advice to health professionals about the safe and effective use of vaccines and the public health benefits associated with vaccination. The NMBA supports the use of the handbook by registered nurses, enrolled nurses and midwives who are giving vaccines. The handbook is available from the [Immunise Australia Program website](#).

The NMBA expects all registered nurses, enrolled nurses and midwives to use the best available evidence in making practice decisions. This includes providing information to the public about public health issues.

All registered nurses, enrolled nurses and midwives are required to practise in accordance with professional standards set by the NMBA, including the codes of conduct, codes of ethics and the standards for practice, in particular the [social media policy](#) and the [guidelines for advertising regulated health services](#).

What should I do if I notice a nurse or midwife is promoting anti-vaccination material?

If you have concerns about a nurse or midwife you can make a complaint to [AHPRA](#). The NMBA will consider whether the nurse or midwife has breached their professional obligations and will treat these matters seriously. Any published anti-vaccination material and/or advice which is false, misleading or deceptive which is being distributed by a registered nurse, enrolled nurse or midwife (including via social media) may also constitute a summary offence under the National Law and could result in prosecution by AHPRA.