

Immunization Regulation Duties

Effective: December 18, 2020

INTRODUCTION

The College of Licensed Practical Nurses and Health Care Aides of Alberta (CLHA) has the authority under the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) to carry out its activities and govern Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs)* in a manner that protects and serves the public interest.

In November 2016, the Government of Alberta announced changes to the *Public Health Act* aimed at increasing immunization rates, improving capacity to manage outbreaks, and increasing the quality of immunization services.

To help meet these goals, in October 2018, the Government of Alberta established the new *Immunization Regulation* (Alta. Reg. 182/2018). The *Immunization Regulation* increases responsibilities for health professionals, including all LPNs.

As with all aspects of nursing practice, the LPN is reminded to work within all legislative and regulatory requirements for LPNs.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this interpretative document is to guide LPNs through the requirements of the *Immunization Regulation*.

This document is not a substitute for legal advice.

INTERPRETATION

The *Immunization Regulation* came into force in two phases. The first phase came into effect as of December 17, 2018, and the second phase on January 1, 2021. LPNs are responsible for following all components of the *Immunization Regulation*.

Components of Immunization Regulation

There are three parts to the *Immunization Regulation*: assessment and immunization reporting, reporting of an adverse event following immunization, and maintenance of vaccine viability.

* In this document, "LPN(s)" has the same meaning as "regulated member(s)" in the *Health Professions Act*

Assessment and Immunization Reporting

As of January 1, 2021, all health practitioners, including LPNs, are required to report immunizations and immunization assessments electronically to Alberta Health within seven days.

The *Immunization Batch Data Submission and Response* guidelines describe specific requirements for reporting electronically.

Key Highlights: Part 1 of the *Immunization Regulation*

- If an LPN recommends an immunization but does not receive consent, or the LPN determines that the immunization is contraindicated, an assessment report must be submitted electronically to the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) no later than seven days after the assessment.
- An LPN who administers a vaccine will be required to report the immunization electronically to Alberta Health's CMOH no later than seven days after the immunization.
- An LPN who receives a written record about a past unreported immunization must ensure that a report about the unreported immunization is submitted to the CMOH.

Reporting of Adverse Events Following Immunization

As of December 17, 2018, all LPNs are required to report adverse events following immunization (AEFI). Section 1(2) of the *Immunization Regulation* sets out what unfavorable health occurrences are considered as an AEFI.

Information on when and what to report involving an AEFI are included in the Alberta Health document *Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) Policy for Alberta Immunization Providers*.

All health practitioners must report an AEFI to Alberta Health Services (AHS) within three days after determining that an AEFI has occurred as defined in section 1(2) of the *Immunization Regulation*.

The AHS Central AEFI Reporting Line at 1-855-444-2324 (1-855-444-CDCI) manages all reports of AEFIs as part of the AHS Province-wide Immunization Program. AHS will provide specific direction for LPNs employed by AHS Public Health.

Please visit the AHS website for further information.

Key Highlights: Part 2 of the Immunization Regulation

All LPNs are required to report adverse events following immunization, whether or not the individual LPN administered the vaccine.

Maintenance of Vaccine Viability

Vaccines may become less effective or destroyed when exposed to temperatures outside the recommended range or from inappropriate exposure to light. “Cold chain” refers to the processes and procedures that maintain optimal temperature and light conditions during the transport, storage, and handling of vaccines.

All LPNs with immunization training have knowledge related to vaccine storage and handling procedures. LPNs must follow the requirements set out in Part 3 of the *Immunization Regulation*. Those providing publicly funded vaccines must follow the parameters set out in the *Alberta Vaccine Storage and Handling Policy for Provincially Funded Vaccine*.

The *Alberta Vaccine Storage and Handling Policy for Provincially Funded Vaccine* sets out cold chain practices in Alberta and defines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in managing the storage and handling of publicly funded vaccines, such as community providers including LPNs and AHS.

Key Highlights: Part 3 of the Immunization Regulation

LPNs who administer vaccines must follow the requirements related to storing, handling, and transporting of vaccines as outlined in the *Immunization Regulation*. LPNs providing publicly funded vaccines (i.e. employed with AHS) must also follow parameters outlined in the *Alberta Vaccine Storage and Handling Policy for Provincially Funded Vaccine*.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

First Nations and Inuit Health

First Nations and Inuit Health is within the jurisdiction of Health Canada. LPNs employed by the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) will continue to report AEFIs, as well as continue to follow the vaccine cold chain policy and reporting pathways as currently provided by the FNIHB. LPNs must consult with FNIHB employers and follow FNIHB policies and procedures.

Employment Outside of AHS

LPNs employed outside AHS must adhere to the *Immunization Regulation* requirements. This includes LPNs whose roles involve administering vaccines outside of the AHS system (i.e., in industry, clinics, or private institutions).

CONCLUSION

This document aids LPNs in understanding their legal requirements under the *Immunization Regulation*. For further information on Alberta's immunization programs and policies, all current Alberta immunization policy documents can be found on the Alberta Health website.

Documents are updated frequently. For the most current version and access to related documents and resources, please visit the Knowledge Hub on clha.com.

If after reading this document you have questions, please contact the CLHA's Professional Practice Team via practice@clha.com or 780-484-8886 or 1-800-661-5877 (toll free in Alberta).