



Ohio Board of Nursing

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COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccine Administration by Nurses and Nursing Students Immunization Clinics

The current COVID-19 pandemic conditions have made immunizations, including COVID-19 and influenza, very important. All Ohioans are encouraged to be immunized against the flu and COVID-19. Each year, immunizations are being offered in more locations to encourage vaccination protection for Ohio citizens.

These locations, or immunization clinics, are often organized by health departments, employer health services, or health care practices provide the capacity to increase public access for vaccinations. Generally, individuals provide insurance/payment information if required, complete a general questionnaire about allergies and health, and receive the vaccine.

Nurses often ask whether they may provide these vaccines without a physician or other authorized prescriber onsite, and if it is appropriate for the nurse to administer the vaccine based on a COVID-19 or flu vaccine protocol rather than an order for each individual receiving the vaccine.

COVID-19 and Flu Vaccine Protocols

The State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy's Rule 4729:5-3-12 (<http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/4729:5-3-12>), Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) establishes circumstances in which a nurse may initiate or administer a medication using a protocol and one of the specified circumstances is for the administration of vaccines. See paragraph (A)(2) Rule 4729:5-3-12, OAC.

Protocols are treatment guidelines that apply to the general population rather than a specific patient and include definitive orders for drugs and drug dosages approved by a prescriber for the population being served.

Nurses may administer COVID-19 and/or flu vaccine to individuals in an immunization clinic based on an authorized vaccine protocol. Nurses who administer the vaccine in the immunization clinic would implement the protocol for vaccine administration in the same manner they would implement a patient-specific order.

It is important to note that in an immunization clinic, LPNs must practice in accordance with the guidance or direction addressed in the protocol itself or by a RN associated with or in the clinic. LPNs should find this direction in the protocol itself or by a RN associated with or in the clinic.

In response to prior outbreaks of flu, the Pharmacy Board, in 2018, issued a Resolution that is specific to long-term care facilities. *Resolution: Influenza Outbreak Management in Long-Term Care Facilities by Emergency Protocol Adopted: 2/7/2018*, recognizes "that a long-term care facility's administration of influenza antiviral treatment and chemoprophylaxis to residents and health care personnel according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's 'Interim Guidance for Influenza Outbreak Management in Long-Term Care Facilities¹' constitutes an

emergency and may be administered via protocol pursuant to paragraph (L)(1) of rule 4729-5-01 of the Ohio Administrative Code.”

(http://nursing.ohio.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Pharmacy_Influenza_Outbreak-5.1.pdf.)

Authorized Prescriber Onsite and Nursing Practice

Whether the vaccine is authorized by a protocol or by a patient-specific order, RNs and LPNs have the authority pursuant to Section 4723.01(B) and (F), ORC, respectively to administer COVID-19 and/or flu vaccine without a physician or other authorized provider onsite. As with any medication, a nurse must administer the vaccine consistent with the standards of practice set forth in Chapter 4723-4, OAC.

As with other nursing care, nurses are responsible for reviewing and evaluating the patient and circumstances prior to administering the vaccine. For example, consider the potential side effects of the vaccine, the patient’s condition, and documented allergies. If the nurse believes or has reason to believe the vaccine protocol is inaccurate, not current or valid, or not properly authorized; or that administration of the flu vaccine is harmful or potentially harmful, or the vaccine is contraindicated by other documented information, such as a reported allergy to the specific vaccine, the nurse should not administer the vaccine. LPNs must follow similar requirements. (RNs see Rule 4723-4-03, OAC; LPNs see Rule 4723-4-04, OAC.) If a nurse believes or has reason to believe any of these conditions exist, it is the nurse’s responsibility to seek additional clarification and take any other action necessary for the patient’s safety and well-being.

Pre-license Nursing Education Students

Nursing students may assist in COVID-19 and/or flu immunization clinics and may administer vaccines if the nursing student is acting under the auspices of their pre-license nursing education program, and supervised by a program faculty member, teaching assistant or preceptor. See Section 4723.32(A), ORC. The nursing program must have a contract with the agency/entity where the nursing students will be participating in the vaccine clinic. All other aspects of providing the vaccine according to an approved protocol as discussed above are applicable.

Questions

Please email questions about RN or LPN practice to practicernandlpn@nursing.ohio.gov. Many practice resources are available on the Board website, www.nursing.ohio.gov under Practice Resources on the RN & LPN page. Also, please subscribe to eNews on the website to receive timely announcements from the Board delivered to your inbox. The Ohio Nurse Practice Act, Chapter 4723., ORC, and administrative rules are available in their entirety under the “Law and Rules” link on the Board website.