

## **Mandatory Vaccination Order for Midwives**

October 2021

On Monday 11 October 2021, the Government announced that it was extending mandatory vaccinations to workers in the health and disability sector. The resulting Order came into effect at 11.59pm pm on 25 October 2021. Midwives are health professionals regulated under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 so the mandatory vaccination of high risk health care workers includes all midwives.

Chair of the Midwifery Council, Chris Mallon says that the Council expects midwives to adhere to the laws of Aotearoa New Zealand and to comply with the Order. “Midwives who do not comply will not be able to work unless they have a medical exemption,” Chris says.

Midwives have an ethical and professional obligation to protect and promote the health of whānau, and vaccination is crucial to reducing the community risk of acquiring and transmitting COVID- 19. The Council's role is to protect the health and safety of the public by making sure midwives are fit and competent to practise their profession. Vaccination is one way that midwives protect whānau. Vaccination is also one way of protecting midwifery colleagues who care for wāhine and whānau with COVID-19.

Practising midwives must receive the first dose of the vaccine by 15 November 2021 and be fully vaccinated by 1 January 2022.

Chief Executive/Registrar of the Midwifery Council, Dr Sue Calvert says the Council expects that midwives will provide whānau with evidence-based advice and information about all vaccinations, not just the COVID-19 vaccination. “While the Council actively supports midwives to enable informed decision making and respects the individual’s right to have their own opinion, it is the Council’s view that there is no place for anti-vaccination messages in professional practice, nor any promotion of anti-vaccination claims on social media platforms or advertising by midwives” Sue says.

The Council has acted, and will continue to act, if complaints are received about midwives promoting anti-vaccination views or spreading misinformation. Actions taken can include educating the midwife; requiring them to undergo a competence review; or referring them to a professional conduct committee to investigate, with the possible outcome being charges laid before the Disciplinary Tribunal.

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