

NSNZ NOTICE – Vaccinations Policy

Reminder

Clearly, most nurses take a professional and evidence-based approach in relation to vaccinations including when giving advice and information to patients.

- A reminder: The Society will not provide representation, assistance, or legal services, to any member in relation to any employment or professional disciplinary problem arising from an anti-vaccination stance or anti-vaccination activities. This policy applies to vaccinations in general but is particularly apposite now in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccination programme.
- This includes, but is not limited to, disseminating or promoting anti-vaccination information and/or refusing to provide vaccination services to patients, in line with best practice.
- This is a long-standing policy, but it has renewed importance in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- It is not a freedom of expression or human rights issue. Rather, it is a matter of ensuring adherence to evidence-based practice, meeting ethical obligations, and displaying sound professional judgement.
- Additionally, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find any reasonable grounds or mitigating factors to successfully defend such misconduct (action or omission).
- A clear distinction needs to be made between providing appropriate information for informed-consent purposes versus perpetuating anti-vaccination propaganda. Great care needs to be taken however when doing the former to avoid giving any credence to the latter. Information given to patients must be evidence-based.
- There is no place for anti-vaccination messaging in professional practice by nurses, nor any promotion of anti-vaccination claims on any platform, including social media. Such messaging is likely to result in professional disciplinary action.
- Moreover, nurses have an obligation to provide evidence-based advice and information to patients to promote COVID-19 vaccination uptake.
- Additionally, as health professionals, all nurses have a duty to protect themselves, their colleagues, patients and the wider community by being vaccinated themselves – unless medically contraindicated. Both the [Nursing Council of New Zealand](#) and [Medical Council of New Zealand](#) have issued relevant guidance statements on this.

- This notice is issued as a reminder and for the information of new members.



NURSES SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND *Te Kāhui Tapuhi o Aotearoa & Te Uniana o NSNZ*
director@nursessociety.org.nz

26 August 2021