



**Australian Government**

**Department of Health**

**Chief Medical Officer**

**Advice regarding the *Australian Immunisation Register and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017***

Dear Colleague

On 16 August 2017, changes were made to the *Australian Immunisation Register and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017* to allow additional doctors to notify a medical exemption to vaccination to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

As a medical practitioner, you play a key role in supporting your patients to fulfil their vaccination requirements. In the event an individual cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons, you are now one of the specific groups of doctors able to notify the AIR that the individual has a medical exemption to vaccination.

**What action is required?**

- Where medically appropriate, as outlined below, you can certify medical exemptions to vaccination.
- Record those medical exemptions on the [AIR site](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/enablers/accessing-air-using-hpos) (<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/enablers/accessing-air-using-hpos>).

**Eligible Practitioners**

- In addition to General Practitioners (as defined in the *Health Insurance Act 1973*), the following practitioners are able to notify a medical exemption to vaccination to the AIR:
  - paediatricians;
  - public health physicians;
  - infectious diseases physicians; and
  - clinical immunologists.

**Medical Exemptions**

- The medical basis for vaccination exemption is based on guidance in the [Australian Immunisation Handbook 10th edition](#).

- Medical exemptions to vaccination can only be issued due to a medical contraindication or natural immunity.
  - Medical contraindications to vaccinations are rare and limited to:
    - Permanent*
      - previous anaphylaxis to vaccine/ vaccine component; or
      - significant immunocompromise (live attenuated vaccines only) OR
    - Temporary*
      - acute major medical illness; or
      - significant immunocompromise of short duration (live attenuated vaccines only); or
      - the individual is pregnant (live attenuated vaccines only).
  - Natural immunity to hepatitis B, measles, mumps, rubella and varicella must be confirmed via laboratory testing or physician based clinical diagnosis. Exemption to a combination vaccine on the bases of natural immunity is only valid if immunity is confirmed for all vaccine antigens.
- Conscientious objection (vaccination objection on non-medical grounds) is no longer a valid exemption from the immunisation requirements for certain family payments.

#### **Further Information**

For more information about the AIR, please go to [humanservices.gov.au/hpair](http://humanservices.gov.au/hpair) or call 1800 653 809 (call charges may apply).

Yours sincerely



Professor Brendan Murphy  
Chief Medical Officer

16 January 2018