



NHNA Position Statement

New Hampshire Nurses Association

Established In 1906

New Hampshire Nurses Association
POSITION STATEMENT: SMALLPOX VACCINATION
Approved- February 2003

Background: The New Hampshire Nurses Association understands the need to provide for defensive measures to protect the citizens of New Hampshire from harm caused by terrorist attacks. Further, the New Hampshire Nurses Association recognizes the plausibility of a bio-terrorism attack using smallpox.

The New Hampshire Nurses Association recognizes that smallpox vaccination offers substantial protection against infection from smallpox virus resulting from a terrorist attack. In addition, NHNA recognizes that there are substantial health risks and attendant liability risks associated with smallpox vaccination. NHNA further recognizes that healthcare workers, predominately consisting of nurses, are the only appropriate means to implement a mass- vaccination plan if one should become necessary or ordered by the federal government.

Position: NHNA believes that the participation in a voluntary smallpox vaccination plan is a profoundly individual decision. A nurse considering participation in such a voluntary program must consider his or her own circumstances related to family, employment, liability, economy, patriotism, values & morals, and health. NHNA believes that all organizations and individuals must refrain from attempting to influence or coerce this very personal and individual decision to volunteer for vaccination and assume the risks attendant to vaccination.

NHNA believes that educational efforts and educational material must be available to healthcare workers considering undergoing smallpox vaccination. The seriousness of the consequences in favor of, and opposed to participation in a voluntary vaccination program demand that this decision must be made intelligently and knowingly. NHNA believes that education is the best means to achieve this most important aspect of smallpox vaccination. It is critical a nurse understand exactly what the risks and contraindications to smallpox vaccination, and to further understand any economic and liability related ramifications to vaccination. It is also necessary that educational resources are available for healthcare workers who might be called upon to treat nurses who volunteer and participate in pre-event vaccination plans.

NHNA believes it is inadvisable on the part of anyone involved in smallpox vaccination to undergo vaccination without requisite knowledge and understanding, or to permit or encourage another person to undergo vaccination without assurance that full knowledge and understanding exists.