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Ministry of  
Social Affairs and Health  
FINLAND

# Regulatory basis and organization of vaccination program in Finland

Adult Immunization Board (AIB)  
Country meeting in Finland, Dec 4-5, 2024

*Anni Virolainen-Julkunen*



# Meeting objectives

- How adult vaccination programs are integrated into the national vaccination plan within the healthcare system in Finland
- Current policies and strategies for adult vaccination
- The **regulatory systems** for adult vaccination at the national and regional level
- The role of **economic evaluations** in shaping vaccine policy
- The factors influencing vaccine strategies to increase demand among adults
- The existing vaccination strategies for specific population groups, and the future directions for adult vaccination



# Regulatory basis within the health care structure

- The Communicable Diseases Act (1227/2016) and the related Decrees became applicable as of 1.3.2017 after comprehensive revision
- **A new comprehensive revision currently ongoing** due to changes in the global operating environment, the international agreements and, in particular, the need to coordinate national legislation with the EU legislation
- The national service reform, STM098:00/2023 (*in Finnish*) as part of the Programme of Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's Government
- Complements the reform of the structures of health and social services (health and social services reform), which transferred the **responsibility for organizing services** from municipalities to **wellbeing services counties at the beginning of 2023**

# Comprehensive reform of the Comm Dis Act



- **Objectives**

- To **develop and enhance** prevention of communicable diseases and preparedness
- To **clarify the mandates and roles** of different actors, authorities and other stakeholders
- To **enable adequate and timely measures** to prevent communicable diseases
- To **implement EU and international obligations** concerning communicable diseases at national level

- **Output**

- **revised Communicable Diseases Act and related Decrees**



# What is regulated by law then...

- **Communicable Diseases Act (1227/2016)**

- Chapter 5/ Vaccinations/ **Articles 44-54:**

- National vaccination programme, Other voluntary vaccinations, Vaccinations in the Defence Forces and the Finnish Border Guard, Compulsory vaccination, Vaccination of employees and students to protect patients, General vaccination in occupational health care and in health care and social welfare units
- Vaccine acquisitions, Monitoring the effects of vaccinations and investigating identified or suspected adverse reactions, Notification of adverse reactions, Recording the notifications of adverse reactions to vaccines and vaccinations, **Authority to issue decrees**



## ...and what by the related decrees...

- **Government Decree (146/2017)**

- Responsibilities of different stakeholders (MoH, THL, regional SAA, wellbeing counties)
- Implementation of a general voluntary vaccination (45§ in the Act, COVID-19), of compulsory vaccination (47§ in the Act)

- **Decree of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (149/2017)**

- Vaccines of the national vaccination programme (44§ in the Act), testing materials and antibodies
- Vaccinations given in the Defence Forces and the Finnish Border Guard (46§ in the Act)
- Vaccinations to prevent epidemics
- Authority to vaccinate, responsibility to record and transfer info to vaccination register



# Vaccinations for all adults according to the Decree

- Every adult should be protected by at least three **tetanus, diphtheria and polio** vaccinations
- In addition, each adult should be protected against **measles, rubella and mumps** by either communicable diseases or two doses of MPR vaccine
- If the vaccination coverage of an adult is found to be inadequate with regard to these vaccinations, it will be supplemented
- After this, vaccinations will continue in accordance with the vaccines and grounds for vaccination defined by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare



# Targeted vaccinations for adults according to the Decree




- **Influenza** vaccination
  - for a person whose health is seriously threatened by influenza or whose health benefits significantly from influenza vaccination, and their close contacts
  - for healthcare and social welfare personnel and pharmaceutical service personnel dealing with immediate treatment or care of patients or clients
- **Varicella and pertussis** for healthcare personnel, including students
- **Pneumococcal, meningococcal, tuberculosis, hepatitis A or B** for persons at most risk
- **TBE** vaccination in areas of most risk
- Conscripts will be vaccinated against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, meningococcal disease, influenza, measles, mumps and rubella, and TBE

# Decision-making process of the vaccination programme

**New vaccine available**



**Expert assessment**   
*Efficiency and safety, at the individual and population level*  
*Significance for public health*  
*Cost-effectiveness*




**Vaccination Programme**



**Decree of the MoH**



**Statement by the expert group** 



**Parliament decision on the state budget**



**Advisory Board on Communicable diseases**

**Statement by NITAG** 



**State budget**  
MoH, MF, Gov



**Ministry of Social Affairs and Health**



**Statement by THL** 



# State budget in recent years

Year	Proposed or approved [€]	Final [€]
2021		311 840 000
2022		102 090 000
2023		178 140 000
2024	42 440 000	
2025	40 710 000	



# For consideration before decision making

- If a new vaccine, often expensive, is not cost-effective for all (e.g. the entire birth cohort or everyone over 65 years of age), it is possible to target the vaccination programme at risk groups
- Some university hospitals vaccinate stem cell transplant patients with *Varicella zoster* vaccine since the national assessment of VZ vaccinations has been delayed (due to the COVID-19)
- Centralized state procurement would probably be more economical
- Justified to empower and enhance expertise at THL for the health economic assessment process along with the register data maintenance, research and analytical capability



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