
Advisory Committee on the Health Emergency Response to COVID-19 for People with Disability

Meeting 3 March 2023 – Summary of Outcomes

Committee members with lived experience of disability, carers and advocates raised the following issues:

- reports that some people with disability are having trouble accessing vaccination
- the need to continue providing COVID-19 vaccination services that support people with disability, including low sensory vaccination clinics, and
- low fourth dose vaccination rates for people with disability.

Members agreed that vaccination rates for people with disability and interventions to improve those will be discussed at the Committee's next meeting.

Dr Lucas de Toca from the Department of Health and Aged Care (the department) provided an update on COVID-19 vaccination. This included:

- current COVID-19 vaccine recommendations and the start of the 2023 booster program. (Further details are in the Minister for Health and Aged Care's [announcement on 8 February 2023](#))
- how eligibility for vaccination is evolving, and
- the approval process for COVID-19 vaccines.

Dr de Toca also provided a COVID-19 epidemiological update. It is becoming more difficult to predict new waves of infection and what subvariants may become dominant.

The department's Health Economics and Research Division (HERD) presented on COVID-19 data for people with disability, including:

- mortality data for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants and Disability Support Pension (DSP) recipients, including by disability type and medical condition
- mortality rates by vaccination status for NDIS participants and DSP recipients.

HERD identified some limitations with the data they presented, and the Committee discussed the need for continued and deeper analysis. Further input will be sought from the Committee and its data working group on:

- methodological considerations for further analysis, especially age standardisation
- how to communicate about risks with people with disability and the disability support sector
- how available data can inform interventions to reduce mortality rates, and
- how to investigate other causes of death in people with disability.

NEXT STEPS

The department will:

- convene a meeting of the Committee's data working group to discuss further analysis of COVID-19 mortality data for people with disability
- invite state and territory representatives to join the Committee's data working group
- seek input from the Victorian Department of Health on measures in place to support access to vaccination for people with disability in Victoria, and
- progress action items outstanding from the Committee's meeting on 24 January 2023.

The Committee will discuss vaccination rates for people with disability and interventions to improve those at the Committee's next meeting.

The Committee's next meeting will be on 3 April 2023.