Australian Government

COVID-19 VACCINATION

Keep your disability workforce up to date by circulating this alert widely in your organisation

Disability Provider Alert

1 May 2023

Supporting people with disability to access COVID-19 vaccination

The Department of Health and Aged Care has published a video on how disability support providers can help people with disability to access COVID-19 vaccination. The video features, Ricky Kremer from Council for Intellectual Disability interviewing Jo-Anne Hewitt, CEO of NDIS provider Achieve Australia. Jo-Anne talks about how they helped people to access COVID-19 vaccination.

Service Finder: replacing Vaccine Clinic Finder

Vaccine Clinic Finder has been replaced by the Healthdirect Australia Service Finder. All links to Vaccine Clinic Finder have been redirected and all vaccine services have moved to Service Finder.

The Service Finder's new and improved platform is available in 16 languages and connects people to healthcare services online. This includes finding and booking influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations for the 2023 winter season.

COVID-19 vaccination rollout data – updated format

From 31 March, the Australian Government's reports on vaccine uptake has changed. Reporting now matches the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation's advice for time-based instead of numbered doses. The weekly statistics will report on how many adults:

- have received a 2023 booster dose
- have received a dose in the past 6 months
- have received one more than 6 months ago, and
- are completely unvaccinated.

Expanded access to oral treatment Paxlovid

The Australian Government has expanded eligibility for the oral treatment Paxlovid, under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). From 1 April 2023, over 160,000 people aged 60 to 69 have access to Paxlovid.

The change means Australians in this age group with only one risk factor for severe illness – instead of 2 – will get access to PBS-subsidised Paxlovid.

People should discuss early with their doctor or nurse practitioner about whether an oral antiviral treatment suits their health needs. This discussion should also cover developing a COVID-19 plan if they test positive.

Information about oral treatments for COVID-19, including eligibility and access to these treatments, is on the Department's website.

COVID-19 Vaccination In-Reach Services

The Department of Health and Aged Care is working with Primary Health Networks (PHNs) across Australia to communicate with disability service providers about the 2023 COVID-19 booster roll out.

PHNs will help sites by finding primary care vaccination options in the first instance, including in-reach services provided on site. Primary care providers such as General Practitioners and Pharmacists will administer COVID-19 vaccinations for people with disability, including those in accommodation settings.

Extra help is available, in limited circumstances, through the Vaccine Administration Partners Program.

If you have not heard from your local PHN and you need help to arrange a COVID-19 booster service provider, you can find the contact details of your local PHN here.

If you have any other enquiries about the 2023 COVID-19 booster, contact the Department's COVID-19 vaccine disability team.

Top up your COVID-19 protection campaign

The Department of Health and Aged Care's "Top Up" campaign launched on 2 April across several channels. It highlights how important boosters are to protect against severe COVID-19 illness. View the campaign materials at health.gov.au/TopUp.

COVID-19 Text Message Campaign

Disability Support Pension, Carer Payment and Carer Allowance recipients will have recently received an Australian Government text message to offer help with the COVID-19, 2023 booster vaccine.

The Disability Gateway helps people with disability, and their families to find the support they need in Australia, including COVID-19 information and support to book vaccines. Call the Disability Gateway on 1800 643 787, Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm AEDT or visit www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/.

Carer Gateway provides a free Australia-wide, dedicated carer support service to all carers, including providing COVID-19 information and support to book vaccines. For more information, call Carer Gateway on 1800 422 737 Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm or visit www.carergateway.gov.au/covid-19.

Victoria: COVID-19 Forum for People with Disability, 1 May 2023

The Victorian Department of Health is holding a free COVID-19 online forum for people with disability on 1 May 2023. Attendees will hear updates on COVID-19 transmission in Victoria, vaccination, the latest science on Long COVID, and positive adaptations and strategies for addressing COVID-19 health risks for people with disabilities and disability organisations.

Support for people with disability, providers, carers and families

Disability Gateway on **1800 643 787** - open from 8 am to 8 pm, Monday to Friday.

Department of Health and Aged Care website at www.health.gov.au

National Coronavirus and COVID-19 Vaccine Helpline on **1800 020 080.** People with disability, their families and carers should choose Option 5, disability workers should choose Option 4.

For information in a language other than English, choose Option 8. This is a free service.

The Translating and Interpreting Service is also available on **131 450**.

For people who are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, call the National Relay Service on **133 677**.

Don't miss the latest news and updates about COVID-19 and other health matters – follow the Department of Health and Aged Care on Facebook.