Advisory Committee on the Health Emergency Response

to COVID-19 for People with Disability
Meeting 4 July 2023 – Summary of Outcomes

The Department of Health and Aged Care (the department) provided an update on communications actions from previous meetings, including:

* the communications working group’s consideration of ways to better reach families of people with disability with messaging about COVID-19 vaccination, and
* a market research project on how people with disability respond to communications on COVID-19. The department will present findings from this project when the Committee meets in August.

Richard Percy, acting Assistant Secretary of the department’s Public Health and Surveillance Branch, provided a COVID-19 and influenza epidemiological update. Decreased hospitalisations, ICU admissions and COVID-19 associated deaths suggest that Australia is nearing the end of its current COVID-19 wave. Influenza cases are approximately 25% lower than last year. Most influenza case notifications have been for people aged 5-19 years, however severe outcomes from influenza are more common in older people.

The department’s COVID-19 Vaccine Program Division outlined its current activities to support vaccination in people with disability. These include:

* connecting disability accommodation providers to primary care vaccine providers,
* updating information on accessible clinics in the health [Service Finder](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/service-finder), through which people can book a COVID-19 vaccination
* working with the Department of Social Services, the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) and the National Disability Insurance Agency, and
* developing information sheets on vaccination pathways for people with people with disability. The Committee’s feedback was also sought on two draft information sheets.

The NDIS Commission presented on:

* provider responsibilities to support NDIS participants to access vaccination, and
* how it supports and enforces provider compliance.

The Committee discussed the:

* accessibility of primary care vaccination services for people with intellectual disability
* people with disability who need access to home-visit vaccination services who do not live in disability accommodation settings
* disability support workers’ understanding of COVID-safe behaviours and their role in supporting access to vaccination.

The department’s Health Economics and Research Division ;provided an update on COVID-19 data for people with disability.

Members requested a further discussion on eligibility criteria for COVID-19 oral treatments.

**NEXT STEPS**

The department will:

* circulate a summary of activities to support access to COVID-19 vaccination for people with disability
* update information sheets on vaccination pathways for people with disability based on feedback provided by Committee members
* discuss eligibility criteria for COVID-19 oral treatments at a future meeting.