



Aged Care – COVID-19 pandemic response – pathology testing in aged care

The Australian Government is committed to protecting older Australians and the aged care workforce from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Budget funds COVID-19 testing for aged care residents and workers as an important intervention to help limit and prevent potential outbreaks in residential aged care facilities – and among older Australians who receive care in their own homes.

The Australian Government has delivered more than 165,000 tests to aged care residents and staff across Australia through a contract with pathology provider, Sonic Healthcare. The Government has provided further support by funding bulk-billed Medicare tests for asymptomatic Victorian aged care workers and home care workers.

Why is this important?

Older Australians, including residents of aged care facilities, are particularly vulnerable and at risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Where there are high levels of community transmission there is an increased risk of outbreaks at residential aged care facilities. This is why more stringent protections to protect older Australians have been introduced.

Testing for COVID-19 is a central pillar in Australia's suppression strategy. Testing requirements, including asymptomatic testing of aged care workers and home care workers, has helped detect cases of COVID-19 and allowed contact tracing to identify those at risk.

This measure is informed by, and supports, the Government's Coronavirus National Health Plan, to ensure all Australians have the support they need throughout this pandemic and that we remain prepared across the country.

Who will benefit?

The 282,000 people in residential and associated aged care services around Australia and their families can have greater confidence that they are being protected from COVID-19.

The pathology testing also protects the aged care and home care workforce and ensures it is able to provide necessary care to older vulnerable Australians.

How much will this cost?

This will be delivered under *Guaranteeing Medicare – COVID-19 Pandemic Response - Pathology* at a cost \$146 million in 2019–20 to 2020–21.