
**Advisory Committee on Health Emergency Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) for
People with Disability
Sixth Meeting: 5 May 2020
Key Outcomes**

The Department of Health (the department) advised members of the Advisory Committee that the short-form Easy Read version of the Management and Operational Plan for People with Disability (the Plan) was now available online at health.gov.au. The department also advised that a range of communication materials were almost finalised, including advice for health professionals and for congregate settings. Members were updated on the progress to establish a national advisory phone service for health professionals caring for people with disability. The department thanked the Advisory Committee for its tremendous contribution and assistance in progressing key actions within the Plan.

The NDIS Quality and Safety Commission provided an update to the Advisory Committee on surveillance infection data for NDIS participants.

Each state and territory provided an update on the situation for people with disability in their jurisdiction and the initiatives currently being carried out to support them, which included, but was not limited to:

- the development of accessible communication resources
- outreach programs
- the development of strategic documents
- stakeholder engagement, and
- increased COVID-19 testing.

The Advisory Committee discussed a range of topics including, but not limited to:

- the importance of recognising psychosocial disabilities in the COVID-19 Response Plan for people with disability and for in the Mental Health Plan, and ensuring that the mental health and wellbeing of people with disability is considered in the development of strategic activities
- the need for a considered approach, and guidance on returning to the school environment for students with disability
- positive feedback provided by people with disability regarding improved access to the National Medical Stockpile
- the need to ensure the COVIDSafe App is as accessible as possible and well understood;
- acknowledgment of the effective promotion of the Department of Social Services Disability Information Helpline
- praise for the collaborative and productive relationship developing between the Health and disability sectors, and
- the ongoing need to ensure that consistent visitor support worker protocols for hospital and congregate settings are applied across all jurisdictions.

NEXT STEPS

- The Advisory Committee will continue to meet weekly, with state and territory representatives invited to attend meetings on an ongoing basis.
- The Department of Health will continue to progress the communications strategy, the Evaluation Framework and the establishment of an advisory phone service for health professionals.

- Jurisdictional representatives will explore what support is being offered to people with disability located in correctional facilities, including juvenile settings.
- The department will seek further information regarding the accessibility of the COVIDSafe App.
- The department will review suggested amendments to the Management and Operational Plan for People with Disability, and commence the next iteration of the Plan.
- The department will review the mental health issues paper in the context of the needs of people with psychosocial disability.
- The department will collaborate with the Department of Education to ensure it considers the health needs of students with disability.
- Urgent work will continue on the communication materials including the development of a disability-specific webpage on health.gov.au.