
Advisory Committee on the Health Emergency Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) for People with Disability – 8 June 2021

Key Outcomes

The Victorian Department of Health updated the Advisory Committee on the current COVID-19 outbreak in Victoria and the vaccination rollout arrangements for the disability sector. This included:

- COVID-19 case and vaccination data, and the number of vaccination hub sites available
- details on how people can make bookings and get more information, and
- a fast track lane with extended hours at state-run vaccination hubs, and Disability Liaison Officers to help people with disability.

The Australian Department of Health (the Department) gave an update on the COVID-19 vaccination rollout for people with disability and the disability sector. This included:

- ongoing ramp up of the rollout in residential disability support settings through in-reach vaccination, and vaccination hubs set up by in-reach providers
- updates on communication products, including plans to conduct focus groups with disability support workers. This will allow the Department to explore vaccine hesitancy and test a range of communication products, and
- discussion on data collection strategies to identify people with disability and disability support workers who have been vaccinated.

The Advisory Committee raised several issues for consideration, including:

- prioritising people with disability who live in residential disability support settings and their support workers, in the national vaccine rollout
- the role of the Advisory Committee in decision-making on the vaccine roll-out
- the number of people with disability and support workers yet to be fully vaccinated and the risk of significant outbreaks of COVID-19 as winter approaches
- the possibility of allowing people in phase 1b to receive the Pfizer vaccine, regardless of age, so they are protected sooner
- balancing the rights of people with disability and disability support workers and their vaccination status, including discussing mandatory disclosure and/or vaccinations, and
- the need for a clearer definition of 'significant disability' in the vaccine eligibility checker.

The Committee noted its agreed priorities under the Management and Operational Plan.

NEXT STEPS

The Department will:

- tell the Committee about the findings of the disability support worker focus groups
- continue to improve data collection on the number of people with disability who have been vaccinated, and consider options for publishing this data
- seek the Advisory Committee's advice on the issue of mandatory vaccination for disability support workers and ask the AHPPC to consider this
- seek the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation's advice on making the Pfizer vaccine available to people with disability in Phase 1b, and
- further clarify what 'significant disability' means in the eligibility checker.