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**Roundtable with State and Territory Representatives and Key Stakeholders on  
COVID-19 Vaccination Program for People with Disability  
2 February 2021  
Key Outcomes**

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The Department of Health (the Department) updated members of the Roundtable on the COVID-19 vaccination strategy for the disability sector on:

- Where to find information on the Australian Government's COVID-19 vaccine national rollout strategy: [www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/australias-covid-19-vaccine-national-roll-out-strategy](http://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/australias-covid-19-vaccine-national-roll-out-strategy).
- The global demand for safe and effective vaccines to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Vaccines will be given to people who are in higher risk groups as soon as they become available. Priority groups are identified by taking into account public health, medical and epidemiological evidence on who would be most affected if they contracted COVID-19.
- The COVID-19 vaccine will be voluntary, universal and free. Some people with disability will be eligible to receive the vaccine in phases 1a and 1b of the vaccine rollout. This eligibility includes:

**In phase 1a**

- People with disability living in residential care/support settings with two or more people with disability. This includes both National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) supported settings and non-NDIS supported settings. Eligibility in this phase is determined by the setting, not by whether or not a person has underlying medical conditions.
- Staff working in the residential support settings (including all paid supporters and paid carers providing support in these settings).
- Unless otherwise agreed with state and territory governments, the Australian Government will be delivering vaccinations in these residential disability care settings. The Australian Government will liaise with service providers about rollout arrangements.

**In phase 1b**

- People with disability 18 years and over with underlying medical conditions. This is as advised by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) and posted on the Australian Government Department of Health website.
- From Phase 1b, COVID-19 vaccines will be provided in multiple locations. This includes general practices, General Practice Respiratory Clinics (GPCRs), state-run vaccination clinics and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS).
- The Department will provide further information in coming weeks. This will include vaccine eligibility arrangements for others within the disability sector who are not eligible as part of either phase 1a or phase 1b. This includes, but is not limited to,
  - those who live at home with high support needs requiring 24/7 care,
  - those unable to be vaccinated, and
  - families and carers.
- The COVID-19 Vaccination Program is ongoing and the Australian Government aims to have as many people vaccinated as possible in 2021. More people will have access to a vaccine as more doses become available throughout 2021.
- Should an eligible individual decline the vaccine in Phase 1a, they are still eligible to get vaccinated at a later date.
- The Australian Government will provide training to vaccination providers to help administer the vaccine to people with disability.
- The Australian Government requires robust scientific data and analysis before supporting a vaccine candidate. Information about vaccine safety, including side effects and interactions with other medications will be available on [health.gov.au](http://health.gov.au) and in Consumer Medicine Information for approved vaccines.

- Australians are encouraged to rely on reputable sources of information to help them make informed choices and stay up to date. Information will be communicated through Government channels, states and territories, and the health sector.
- To inform the vaccine rollout for people with disability, the Department is engaging regularly with:
  - ATAGI,
  - the Department of Social Services,
  - the NDIA,
  - the NDIS Commission,
  - state and territory governments, and
  - other stakeholders in the disability sector including peak bodies and people with disability.

*Many of these stakeholders are also assisting with identification of residential disability care settings*

### **Communications and the response to Frequently Asked Questions**

The Department provided an overview of how it will communicate to people with disability and the disability sector about the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. The Department will provide information in accessible formats through existing channels and networks. This is to ensure that people with disability, their families, carers and support workers have accurate, timely and appropriate information about the vaccine.

To address frequently asked questions, Roundtable members can refer to the Australian Government Department of Health website (<https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines>). This has the latest news and information for Australians about the development, approval process and plans for COVID-19 vaccines. This website remains the best source of information. It addresses questions about the vaccine including those issues raised at the Roundtable for consideration. This includes:

- evidence to find out an individual's eligibility to receive the vaccine,
- evidence about the potential side effects and interactions with other medications (such as the influenza vaccine), and
- details of vaccination locations, as they become available.

In addition, the Department will continue to work with disability sector partners to develop tailored communications and engagement for people with disability. This includes:

- locating, identifying and notifying people with disability when they are eligible to be vaccinated,
- ensuring communications materials are provided in accessible formats to allow sufficient time for decision making. This includes information to address concerns providers and service recipients may have working with or receiving care from staff who have not been vaccinated,
- resources to allow informed consent,
- information regarding vaccination appointments for people with disability,
- availability of interpreters and the influence this may have on communicating and facilitating the vaccine rollout, including in rural and remote areas, and
- vaccinating people with disability not in category 1a who are unable to attend a vaccination site.

### **NEXT STEPS**

- The Department will circulate a revised version of the COVID-19 Vaccination Program Disability Sector Implementation Plan to Roundtable attendees.
- The Department will continue to engage with Roundtable attendees to gain feedback and suggestions about improvements to communications on the COVID-19 vaccine.