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## **Advisory Committee on the Health Emergency Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) for People with Disability – 3 August 2021**

### **Key Outcomes**

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

- vaccination rates among:
  - National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants
  - NDIS participants living in disability accommodation
  - NDIS participants living in residential aged care facilities, and
  - disability workers who have undergone NDIS Worker Screening
- efforts to collect data on COVID-19 vaccine refusal for NDIS participants living in disability accommodation
- recent ATAGI advice that from 9 August the COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine be made available to adolescents aged 12-15 with either specific medical conditions, who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or live in a remote community, and
- focus groups conducted to gain better insights into vaccine sentiments among disability support workers and their communication needs.

Dr Jennifer Fitzgerald, CEO of disability support service provider Scope, presented findings from a staff survey on COVID-19 vaccination.

The Advisory Committee discussed:

- concerns around the accessibility of the upcoming webinar for people with intellectual disability
- the lack of publicly available data on the status of the vaccine rollout for people with disability and the disability sector
- concerns around substitute decision makers withholding consent for the COVID-19 vaccination of people with disability living in disability accommodation
- the need for qualitative and quantitative data on vaccine refusal
- issues surrounding the use of sedation to support the administration of COVID-19 vaccination, and
- concerns about some residents of group homes in New South Wales being confined to their residence.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The Department will:

- take the issues raised by the Advisory Committee on the use of sedation to support the administration of COVID-19 vaccines to the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee
- seek the Advisory Committee's input on arrangements for in-reach COVID-19 vaccination services beyond the current phase 1a rollout, and
- follow-up with the NDIS Quality Safeguards Commission on reports of people in group homes being confined to their residence.