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

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### **Meeting 7 September 2021 – Summary of Outcomes**

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The Department of Health (the Department) provided updates on the COVID-19 vaccination rollout for people with disability and disability support workers, including:

- vaccination rates among:
  - NDIS participants living in residential care settings
  - NDIS participants 16 years and over
  - disability workers who have undergone NDIS worker screening, and
- measures to target areas with lower disability support worker vaccination rates.

The Advisory Committee expressed concern about lagging vaccination rates among people with disability and disability support workers and requested the publication of data on progress.

Participants discussed:

- delays in access to vaccination appointments for people with disability eligible in phase 1b, including 12 to 17-year-olds
- prioritisation of people with disability in the rollout of COVID-19 vaccine booster shots
- increasing disability workforce pressures, particularly in metro NSW
- risks associated with a return to school for children with disability with underlying conditions and those with siblings of school age
- accessible ways to demonstrate vaccination status and alternatives to QR code check-in
- communications to people with disability in public housing blocks in lockdown
- lagging vaccination rates in prisons and juvenile detention facilities, and
- equitable allocation of intensive care unit (ICU) beds and ventilators.

New South Wales reported on:

- guidance it has developed on the prioritisation of access to ICU beds and ventilators, and
- printable personal QR codes being trialled by Services NSW, as an alternative to smartphone check-in.

Ability First Australia (AFA) presented findings from a recent Ability Forum survey on the attitudes of people with disability and carers toward COVID-19 vaccinations.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The Department will:

- report the issues raised by the Committee to the Chief Medical Officer and relevant Commonwealth entities
- provide the Advisory Committee with a written update on COVID-19 vaccine communications
- ask states and territories to report on vaccination in prisons and juvenile detention facilities at the Disability and Health Sector Consultation Committee meeting scheduled for 15 September 2021, and
- schedule an extraordinary Advisory Committee meeting for late September 2021 to address:
  - COVID-19 vaccination for people with psychosocial disability, and
  - management of COVID-19 risk for students with disability.