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**Advisory Committee on the Health Emergency Response to Coronavirus  
(COVID-19) for People with Disability  
Meeting 19 October 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. Updates included:

- national and state and territory vaccination rates among:
  - National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants, and
  - disability workers who have undergone NDIS worker screening
- work to identify people with disability who require in-reach services to access vaccination
- further in-reach vaccination opportunities to be provided to people with disability, who initially refused vaccination in phase 1a
- the establishment of a working group to provide advice on vaccine communications for people with disability and their supporters, and
- research being undertaken to improve the accessibility of the COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Finder and other systems.

The Advisory Committee raised concerns about the scope of the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation's (ATAGI's) current recommendations for third primary doses. The Department was asked to relay members' request that ATAGI urgently consider the issue of boosters for:

- people in phases 1a and 1b, who may have had their second doses more than 6 months ago, and
- a broader range of people with underlying risk and/or impaired immunity.

The Advisory Committee requested:

- the publication of the Vaccine Acceleration Plan for NDIS Participants and Workers or a summary of the document
- access to updated data on vaccination rates among people with disability by jurisdiction and disability type
- information on local government areas where vaccination rates among people with disability are lagging, and
- regular updates on COVID-19 cases amongst NDIS participants and workers.

The Advisory Committee also discussed:

- implications of the management of primary and secondary contacts for people who require close personal supports, and
- substitute decision makers refusing vaccination on behalf of people with disability. This included:
  - the human rights issue, if a substitute decision-maker (who may not be a legally recognised guardian) makes a refusal decision on a person's behalf, and
  - potential measures to address such refusal.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Department will:

- raise the Advisory Committee's concerns about third primary doses and booster doses with ATAGI and other relevant Commonwealth officers
- work with interested Committee members on the development of a question and answer webinar for people with disability on the easing of restrictions and living with COVID-19.

Content will include management of case contacts. The development of further related communications products will be considered.

- work with the National Disability Insurance Agency and states and territories to provide a summary on work undertaken to increase vaccine accessibility
- report to the Advisory Committee on vaccine refusal among people with disability in phase 1a, when data becomes available
- request a report from the NDIS Commission on COVID-19 cases amongst NDIS participants and workers at the Advisory Committee's next meeting.

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee will be held on 26 October 2021.