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**Advisory Committee on the Health Emergency Response to Coronavirus  
(COVID-19) for People with Disability  
Meeting 3 November 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. This included:

- vaccination rates among:
  - National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants, and
  - disability workers who have undergone NDIS worker screening.
- continuing prioritisation of first and second doses for people with disability in phases 1a and 1b, noting the start of the vaccine booster program
- providing in-reach to support delivery of vaccine booster doses for people with disability in phase 1a who received in-reach for the first two doses
- the status of in-reach provider reporting on vaccine uptake and refusal, and
- recent and upcoming communication activities and outcomes from the second meeting of the Committee's vaccine communications working group.

Members expressed disappointment about the lack of reporting on vaccine refusal among people with disability eligible in phase 1a. They expressed concern about ongoing priority for people with disability in phase 1a who have yet to be vaccinated, especially once the booster program commences.

The Department and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) presented on the use of rapid antigen testing in Australia. A pilot is under way to understand potential applications for worker screening and outbreak management in residential care settings.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission reported on COVID-19 cases and related deaths among NDIS participants and workers, including current trends in the data. An epidemiologist from the Department provided further context on public health data collection and the potential role of data linkage in providing more epidemiological data moving forward.

NSW and the ACT reported on:

- their use of data on vaccination rates among people with disability by local government area, and
- strategies to reach the remaining people with disability who are unvaccinated or have not received a second dose.

The Advisory Committee discussed:

- a position paper, shared by Inclusion Australia, on barriers to COVID-19 vaccination for people with intellectual disability
- identifying people with disability who may need access to in-reach vaccination
- providing information to states and territories, enabling identification of people with disability who are unvaccinated
- more individualised approaches to reach the remaining people with disability who are unvaccinated
- access to updated data on vaccination rates among people with disability by jurisdiction and disability type
- available guidance on rapid antigen testing, and the practicalities and legalities of disability support providers requiring worker testing, and

- concerns about the limited definition of health practitioner applied to the supervision of point-of-care rapid antigen tests.

## NEXT STEPS

The Department will:

- give a response to the recommendations from the Inclusion Australia paper. This will be discussed at the next regular meeting of the Committee.
- seek to give the Committee updated data on vaccination rates among people with disability, by jurisdiction and disability type
- circulate among the Committee links to recent communications products on COVID-19 vaccination for people with disability
- at the next regular meeting of the Committee:
  - provide updates on:
    - efforts to identify areas where vaccination rates for people with disability continue to lag, and further efforts are needed
    - outcomes from the next COVID-19 vaccine communications working group meeting
  - seek updates from states and territories on:
    - actions to support COVID-19 vaccination of people with disability, including vaccination rates of people with disability living in:
      - assisted boarding houses
      - supported residential services, and
      - juvenile detention facilities and prisons.

The next meeting of the Committee on 9 November 2021 will be an extraordinary meeting to focus on lessons learnt throughout the pandemic.