
**Advisory Committee on the Health Emergency Response to Coronavirus
(COVID-19) for People with Disability
Meeting 24 November 2021 – Summary of Outcomes**

The Department of Health (the Department) presented data on COVID-19 vaccination rates for people with disability by:

- Local Government Area (LGA), focusing on areas where vaccination rates are lagging those for the general population
- disability type across jurisdictions, and
- culturally and linguistically diverse background.

The Committee requested future reports include available data on the vaccination status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability.

The Department reported on work to prepare the primary care system for an increase in COVID-19 cases, as Australia opens up. Most COVID-positive people will be managed in the community due to high vaccination rates. Measures supporting the treatment of patients in the community include:

- national COVID-19 triage through Healthdirect
- the publication of national guidance on care pathways
- supporting home visits for patients recovering at home
- extending the reach of General Practice Respiratory Clinics. This will support COVID-positive people without access to a usual general practitioner (GP) or general practice, and
- updated COVID-19 Management Guidelines for GPs covering treatment of COVID-positive patients with moderate symptoms and support care for COVID-19 positive people at home.

The Department of Social Services provided the latest national vaccination figures for National Disability Insurance Scheme participants and Disability Support Pension recipients.

The Department provided an update on COVID-19 vaccine communications, including the 'Spread Freedom' media campaign.

The Advisory Committee discussed:

- concern around triage in intensive care units. The need for qualified decision makers in hospitals to mitigate against unconscious bias for people with disability was highlighted.
- potential reactions to the Spread Freedom media campaign for people with disability and Indigenous communities experiencing lagging vaccination rates, and
- reports of parents with adult children with disability who have been refused access to their child's vaccination certificate from Medicare.

NEXT STEPS

The Department will

- report data on COVID-19 vaccination and people with disability at future meetings and include available information on vaccination rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability
- provide a further update on activities supporting the treatment of COVID-positive people in the community, and
- publish a monthly summary of COVID-19 vaccine communications for people with disability.

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee is scheduled for 30 November 2021.