



Australian Government

COVID-19 VACCINATION

COVID-19 Winter dose program in residential aged care – roles and responsibilities for Commonwealth in-reach clinics

Information current as at 14 April 2022

Primary care providers are the key delivery channel for the Winter dose program.

Commonwealth in-reach clinics will be delivered for facilities who cannot secure a primary care provider and cannot self-administer their COVID-19 Winter doses.

A Commonwealth in-reach program will deliver COVID-19 Winter doses to all eligible residents in aged care facilities and workers who meet the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) **definition** of a vulnerable individual.

When on site, vaccine providers will be able to administer COVID-19 vaccines for any resident or worker that needs one. In addition to Winter doses, this includes:

- first doses
- second doses
- third doses given to an individual because they are severely immunocompromised as assessed by their health practitioner, and
- booster doses.

The following information sets out the roles and responsibilities for Winter clinics delivered by Commonwealth vaccine providers. Different arrangements apply for clinics delivered by primary care providers and for facilities conducting their own on-site clinics.

Roles and responsibilities

The Commonwealth Winter dose program is delivered to residential aged care facilities by vaccine providers contracted to the Commonwealth. Primary Health Networks (PHNs) and the department's State and Territory Office network (STOs) provide key support to the program. Respective roles and responsibilities are set out below.

Primary Health Networks (PHNs)

Primary Health Networks are a key delivery partner and have an integral role in engaging with residential aged care facilities, vaccine providers, and the Department to assist the efficient and effective delivery of the Winter dose vaccine program.

Key Primary Health Network responsibilities include:

- Liaison and communication with residential aged care facilities to provide information and support, including facilitating local connections to primary care providers to deliver in-reach vaccine services. Primary Health Networks continue to be residential aged care facilities' first point of contact for all assistance related to accessing a COVID-19 vaccine. Primary Health Networks will provide information to residential aged care facilities including in relation to:
 - engaging with a primary care provider
 - Winter vaccines and the residential aged care Winter dose program
 - clinic schedules
 - consent processes, and
 - vaccine provider contact, vaccine delivery and 'what to expect'.
- Liaison and engagement with vaccine providers to inform the development of plans and schedules for the delivery of vaccine services in the Primary Health Network region for facilities that are unable to organise administration of the vaccine through a primary care provider or self-run clinic. This includes providing local intelligence and information, including on specific residential aged care facilities that will assist the delivery of a safe and efficient vaccine program.
- Escalating issues to the Department for formal consideration and resolution.

Residential aged care facilities (RACFs)

Residential aged care facilities are responsible for hosting in-reach COVID-19 Winter dose vaccination clinics and supporting residents and eligible workers to access a COVID-19 vaccine safely and effectively.

Key responsibilities include:

- Liaising with primary care providers and Primary Health Networks to secure local access to deliver in-reach vaccine services as a first option.
- Supporting residents and their family, carers and loved ones, and residential aged care workers to access trusted information on the Winter dose and clinic.
- Managing consent processes for residents (refer COVID-19 vaccination – Consent guidance for residential aged care and COVID-19 vaccination – Consent process flow chart).
- Planning with vaccine providers for a clinic including:
 - setting a clinic date
 - determining how the site will be configured to support the safe and efficient operation of the clinic on the day, and compliance with Pfizer site readiness requirements (refer COVID-19 vaccination – Site readiness checklist).
- Preparing the facility for the clinic (refer COVID-19 vaccination – Planning checklist) including:
 - the physical environment
 - residents
 - staff, and
 - family, health professionals and other support people.
- Accepting a vaccine delivery to your facility (in limited circumstances), completing necessary paperwork, and storing the vaccines in accordance with the information and instructions provided.

- Preparing residents for the clinic including assessing their clinical suitability for a vaccine on the day and post clinic monitoring and reporting any adverse events (refer COVID-19 vaccination – Clinical governance requirements).
- Reporting resident and worker vaccinations through My Aged Care.

Commonwealth vaccine providers

Vaccine providers are responsible for delivering vaccine services consistent with their contractual obligations with the Commonwealth and any supporting policy, guidance or instructions issued by the National COVID Vaccine Taskforce or the Department of Health.

Key vaccine provider responsibilities include:

- Consulting with allocated RACFs to determine the requirement for a Commonwealth in-reach clinic.
- Consulting and engaging with PHNs to develop plans and schedules for the delivery of vaccine services. PHNs local intelligence and relationships with RACFs should be actively taken into account.
- Direct engagement with RACFs to support effective and timely planning and scheduling of vaccine clinics. Timing must enable RACFs a sufficient period (typically not less than one week) to seek consent from substitute decision-makers (where in place) through a supported decision-making process.
- Developing schedules that deliver vaccine services to RACFs.
- Undertaking site readiness assessments to ensure the clinic environment complies with the requirements for the release of the Pfizer vaccine.
- Delivering vaccine services that focus on the resident experience and are completed safely and efficiently.
- Uploading vaccine records to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

Contact points for escalation of issues

- **COVID19VaccineOperationsCentre@health.gov.au** or call the COVID-19 Vaccine Operation Centre (VOC) on 1800 318 208 (7am – 10pm AEST, 7 days) for enquiries on vaccine delivery or cold chain issues only.
- **COVID19Scheduling@health.gov.au** for RACF or PHN enquiries on scheduling of booster clinics.
- **VAS.contracts.COVID-19@health.gov.au** for enquiries on vaccine providers.
- **AgedCareCOVID-19Vaccine@Health.gov.au** for enquiries about aged care vaccine policy matters.