
Advisory Committee on the Health Emergency Response to COVID-19 for People with Disability

Meeting 16 August 2022 – Summary of Outcomes

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) provided an update on their development of COVID-19 vaccination recommendations for younger children. [ATAGI has recommended](#) COVID-19 vaccination for children aged 6 months to under 5 years with:

- severe immunocompromise
- disability, and
- those who have complex and/or multiple health conditions which increase the risk of severe COVID-19.

Prior input from the Committee on how COVID-19 presents risk to people with disability informed the development of this recommendation.

Committee members asked ATAGI about the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccine boosters over time and what an ongoing vaccination program for COVID-19 may include. An ongoing program may be seasonal or responsive to the emergence of new variants of SARS CoV-2.

The Department of Health and Aged Care (Department) presented on the progress of the Committee's data working group. The group has collated priorities to understand existing information gaps. It is currently prioritising:

- producing COVID-19 mortality data for people with disability. The Department will report this to the Committee once the methodology is confirmed.
- broader data sharing of vaccination coverage information with the sector and Primary Health Networks to inform their work.

The data working group is also informing the development of longer-term strategies. For example, linking hospitalisation data to administrative data sets to provide better understanding of the more serious impacts of COVID-19.

Committee members emphasised the importance of developing data on severe impacts of COVID-19 by disability type. There was also interest in data available on long COVID. The Department is currently considering how to identify data for use as a proxy for long COVID.

The Committee discussed strategies to improve the rates of COVID-19 vaccination for people with disability. This discussion focused on:

- using data to demonstrate the risk COVID-19 poses to people with disability and the importance of vaccination
- motivating disability service providers that have more significant engagement with clients to continue to encourage and facilitate access to vaccination, and
- learning from engagement strategies such as Victoria's Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) program.

The Department presented a draft video which aims to raise public awareness of the experiences of people with disability throughout the pandemic. Committee members provided feedback on the video and requested more information on its development. The Department will share this video with the Committee's Communications Working Group for further input.

The Committee briefly discussed the frequency of Committee meetings moving.

NEXT STEPS

The Department will:

- update a document outlining the Committee's proposed strategies to improve vaccination rates following input from the Committee
- invite Victoria to present on the outcomes of their DLO program at an upcoming meeting
- circulate the membership of the Committee's data working group and seek further nominations for the group, and
- request member's views on the preferred frequency of Committee meetings.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for 13 September 2022.