



Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities COVID-19 Health Advisory Group

Update: 19 August 2022

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities COVID-19 Health Advisory Group (Advisory Group) held its 19th meeting on 19 August 2022. Members include leaders from culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse communities and their representative organisations, health experts and medical and public health practitioners. The Advisory Group meets monthly and publishes a communique after each meeting. It has three Working Groups: the Communication Working Group, the Vaccination Strategy Working Group and the Data Working Group.

The Advisory Group plays a main role in supporting the Australian Government to provide an evidence-based response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It builds on the Department of Health and Aged Care's long engagement with culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse stakeholders. The Advisory Group gives advice on the experience of multicultural people and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. It recommends options to lessen the health impacts of COVID-19 on people and communities from multicultural backgrounds.

Updates from the meeting

The National COVID Vaccine Taskforce (the Taskforce) gave an update on the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. [On 3 August 2022, ATAGI recommended](#) COVID-19 vaccination for some children aged 6 months to under 5 years. Children with severe immunocompromise, disability, or complex and/or multiple health conditions which increase the risk of severe COVID-19, are recommended for vaccination. Selected sites will begin vaccinations for this group on 5 September 2022.

The Taskforce continues to provide COVID-19 vaccination in-reach clinics for residential aged care facilities and residential disability settings.

The department discussed newborn bloodspot screening, a free heel-prick test for all babies born in Australia that checks for around 25 rare conditions, depending on the state or territory. The department discussed expanding the number of conditions screened and making sure all babies are screened for the same conditions. Members advised on considerations for multicultural families in newborn bloodspot screening programs. Members advised on stakeholders to engage with in the newborn bloodspot screening expansion project.

The Taskforce gave an update on targeted work to engage people from multicultural communities to increase COVID-19 vaccination uptake where rates are low. The department is working with the Advisory Group and its working groups, multicultural organisations and Primary Health Networks to connect and coordinate activities.

The Advisory Group discussed digital COVID-19 services. The Department is translating the [COVID-19 Symptom and Antiviral Eligibility Checker](#) into other languages. New accessibility features are available on the [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Finder](#) so users can see languages spoken by staff at clinics. They will also be able to see which clinics take patients without a Medicare card, among other accessibility features.

The department gave an update on COVID-19 communications. The department's current COVID-19 communications campaigns are ['Take on winter'](#), ['Kids will be kids'](#) and a [COVID-19 oral treatments campaign](#). Messaging encourages people to talk with their health professional early about COVID-19 oral treatments. The department encourages stakeholders to share the regular COVID-19 multicultural information pack with their networks. [The 16 August 2022 edition of the pack is now available on the department's website](#). The department's multicultural communication agency, Cultural Perspectives is holding grassroots COVID-19 information sessions with multicultural communities.

The Advisory Group endorsed the Advisory Group Workplan for August to December 2022, which the Taskforce worked on with members out of session.

The department presented the latest analysis of COVID-19 vaccine coverage among multicultural populations. To support targeted work, the department is analysing data to identify cohorts with the lowest vaccine uptake.

The Advisory Group will hold its next meeting on 23 September 2022.

See [Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities COVID-19 Health Advisory Group](#) and [terms of reference](#) for more information.