

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Update #25

New patient and resident hygiene guidelines; take the NMHPV self-care quiz; best practice approaches for safe staff amenities for health services; asymptomatic testing for aged care workers

ANMF has collated the important links all in one place, so you don't have to go looking. Please bookmark and check this page regularly – anmfvic.asn.au/covid-19

Members with COVID-19-related employment questions can ask via the Member Assistance online inquiry form <https://anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance>

Please read the information on our website before submitting a question. Member Assistance is not taking phone inquiries as ANMF staff are working remotely. Members whom ANMF deems have complex inquiries will still have phone contact with staff.

The DHHS Coronavirus Guidance Note on Employment-Related Matters (bit.ly/2UhDSU2) was last updated 18 September.

Latest COVID-19 statistics

Healthcare Worker COVID-19 data dashboard (**updated on Tuesdays**) <https://bit.ly/3iQT5q4>

Victorian COVID-19 data dashboard <https://bit.ly/3j5vJwC>

Victorian Chief Health Officer daily update <https://bit.ly/34Et8Ug>

Victorian Chief Health Officer daily media release <https://bit.ly/2EDiQLb>

locations, outbreaks, hospital admissions and deaths via <https://bit.ly/33szLku>

National statistics <https://bit.ly/2RyEXX1>

National residential aged care cases and deaths <https://bit.ly/32FdfwD>

National COVID-19 survey closes on 31 October

We still need more Victorian nurses, aged care personal care workers and midwives to complete the national ANMF COVID-19 survey. Take the 20-minute survey now is.gd/covidandwork

COVID-19 stressed? Take the self-care quiz

All nurses, midwives, personal care workers and nursing and midwifery students are encouraged to reflect on their current circumstances and wellbeing and fill out the Nursing and Midwifery Health Program Victoria's self-care plan questionnaire (via <https://bit.ly/343qHLf>). You will be emailed a self-care plan.

The NMHPV is an independent service providing free and confidential counselling and support to Victorian nurses, midwives, nursing and midwifery students and aged care personal care workers.

Nurses and midwives can be reluctant to seek support, fearing being seen as unprofessional or feeling they should be able to cope. The NMHPV's 'I'm only human' campaign (<https://bit.ly/3dhd0wk>) is aimed at encouraging nurses, midwives, and residential aged care personal care workers, to seek support before you hit crisis point from the demands of working within a one-in-100 years pandemic.

The NMHPV can provide anything from a caring and compassionate listening ear to helping you develop a care plan to get your health back on track. They are also a safe space to talk about family violence, and alcohol and substance use, and can refer you to specialist services if necessary.

To contact NMHPV call 9415 7551 or email admin@nmhp.org.au

Find out more www.nmhp.org.au

ANMF continues to call for precautionary extension of N95 masks

ANMF is calling for the precautionary use of N95 masks, fit tested and fit checked, in all clinical areas of a health service which has COVID-19 patients.

This must go hand in hand with vigilant infection control measures including handwashing, social distancing, current PPE donning and doffing, safe staff meal break areas and frequent and effective cleaning.

ANMF also wants to see all health facilities start fit checking and fit testing N95 masks for all new staff as part of their new employee orientation process.

Update: healthcare infection prevention and wellbeing taskforce

The healthcare worker infection data dashboard (<https://bit.ly/3jQT5q4>) is updated every Tuesday.

Infections are continuing to come down with six new cases in the previous week as at 13 October. There were 16 cases in the previous week (ending 6 October). New cases included three aged care and disability workers (this category is not broken down) and three nurses.

The Healthcare Infection Prevention and Wellbeing Taskforce (<https://bit.ly/343Wtle>) continues to meet weekly. ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary Lisa Fitzpatrick is a member of the taskforce.

Important documents

1. COVID-19 Best practice approaches for safe staff amenities for health services (**new**) <https://bit.ly/3lhKIEZ>
2. Victoria's respiratory protection program <https://bit.ly/2G3yr84>
3. Victoria's respiratory protection program guidelines <https://bit.ly/2G35gSs>
4. Daily attestations: frequently asked questions <https://bit.ly/2RXVjbC>

Authorised by Lisa Fitzpatrick ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary

New guidance to support patients and residents with hygiene care

The DHHS has released guidance for aged care nurses and personal care workers responsible for the assessment, supervision and maintenance of personal hygiene care of patients, residents and clients in aged care facilities, disability homes, hospitals, palliative care services and private residences.

The guidance should ensure those managing healthcare facilities have a clear understanding of the requirements to keep staff safe and that staff are appropriately supported to consistently apply the principles of this document.

This guidance provides information on how to minimise the risk of exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19) when assisting patients, residents or clients with their personal hygiene needs and physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Read the 'Supporting patients with hygiene care during COVID-19' guidance via <https://bit.ly/2H0hknW>

Regular surveillance testing of aged care workers

Victorian public and private aged care workers will undergo asymptomatic surveillance COVID-19 testing as part of an agreement reached between the Victorian and the Commonwealth governments.

Asymptomatic workers undergoing surveillance testing do not have to isolate until they get their results.

All metropolitan aged care staff will be tested every fortnight (around 50 per cent of the workforce a week).

All regional aged care staff will all be tested every month (around 25 per cent of the workforce a week).

Public health services will test all public aged care facility staff and the Commonwealth Government will test all private aged care facility staff using a private provider.

The Commonwealth Government established mobile testing clinics in July to test asymptomatic staff and residents in residential aged care facilities in Melbourne and Mitchell Shire.

Since then Federal Aged Care Minister Richard Colbeck said the 'in-reach' program had already conducted more than 152,000 tests at almost 2000 residential aged care facilities across Australia.

Read the Federal Government's media release <https://bit.ly/33wpSvr>

If you have symptoms

Staff with symptoms must get tested immediately – don't wait for your workplace test – and you must isolate while waiting for your results.

If you do not have access to paid leave, a **Victorian Government test isolation payment of \$450** is available while you wait for test results. More information via bit.ly/3fWygqQ

A **\$1500 Commonwealth Government disaster leave payment** is available if you test positive to COVID-19 and must isolate for 14 days. More information via <https://bit.ly/3iHuEuH>

Aged care facilities encouraged to order N95 respirator masks

Federal Aged Care Minister Richard Colbeck has announced an additional seven million P2/N95 respirator face masks to help the sector drive down COVID-19 case numbers.

Additional P2/N95 masks are being made available from the national medical stockpile to residential aged care facilities in metropolitan Melbourne and the Mitchell Shire to ensure the continued delivery of safe care.

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Residential aged care providers in these areas may submit a one-off request for each relevant service using this online request form (<https://bit.ly/3IC9nEI>). Requests must be submitted by 30 October 2020.

The ANMF has also raised two important issues with Minister Colbeck on behalf of members. We have asked:

1. for clarification and fair advance warning about how long the Federal Government will continue to support private providers with funding which enables members, who are no longer working at their multiple facilities, to nominate one facility and receive their top up wages and shifts. We believe that this advice from Minister Colbeck is critical for our members working in this sector.
2. that the Federal Government in relation to recognising the contribution made by nurses and carers working in the private aged care sector (in addition to the retention bonuses already paid), must include those public and private nurses who volunteered to assist during this extraordinary time. These nurses have worked more than 4,866 shifts and the ANMF believes they are more than entitled to be recognised for their extraordinary contribution.

Federal Aged Care Minister Richard Colbeck is yet to respond.

Safer Care Victoria COVID-19 screening tool for residential aged care services

Safer Care Victoria is encouraging broader and regular COVID-19 screening of older people living in aged care to ensure early identification and response to symptoms of deterioration.

COVID-19 research has found older people may present with different symptoms. Instead of fever and sore throat, atypical signs such as seeming unwell, being upset or sleeping more may indicate illness and require further investigation.

Safer Care Victoria's COVID-19 screening tool for residential aged care services was piloted at 16 public and one private residential aged care facilities. The screening tool is available via <https://bit.ly/33yAkCL>

Aged care royal commission's COVID-19 staffing recommendations fall short

The ANMF has welcomed the aged care royal commission's six recommendations to manage COVID-19 but is extremely disappointed that they do not go far enough to protect nursing home residents.

The 'Aged care and COVID-19: a special report' published on 1 October said the aged care workforce had been 'under-resourced and overworked' prior to the pandemic and was now 'traumatised'.

The report recommends additional staff to facilitate family and friends visiting aged care residents, but it does not address dangerous understaffing issues and the need for nurse/ carer to resident ratios for all shifts.

Aged Care Minister Richard Colbeck said the Federal Government accepted the recommendations saying progress on several of the recommendations was already well underway. Senator Colbeck announced a further \$40.6 million as part of its response to the report.

The report's six recommendations were:

Recommendation 1: The Australian Government should report to Parliament by no later than 1 December 2020 on the implementation of these recommendations.

Recommendation 2: The Australian Government should immediately fund providers that apply for funding to ensure there are adequate staff available to allow continued visits to people living in residential aged care by their families and friends.

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Recommendation 3: The Australian Government should urgently create Medicare Benefits Schedule items to increase the provision of allied health services, including mental health services, to people in aged care during the pandemic. Any barriers, whether real or perceived, to allied health professionals being able to enter residential aged care facilities should be removed unless justified on genuine public health grounds.

Recommendation 4: The Australian Government should establish a national aged care plan for COVID-19 through the national cabinet in consultation with the aged care sector.

This plan should:

- establish a national aged care advisory body
- establish protocols between the Australian Government and the States and Territories based on the NSW Protocol but having regard to jurisdictional differences
- maximise the ability for people living in aged care homes to have visitors
- and to maintain their links with family, friends and the community
- establish a mechanism for consultation with the aged care sector
- about use of Hospital in the Home programs in residential aged care
- establish protocols on who will decide about transfers to hospital
- of COVID-19 positive residents, having regard to the protocol proposed
- by Aged and Community Services Australia
- ensure that significant outbreaks in facilities are investigated by an independent expert to identify lessons that can be learnt. The results of any such investigations should be promptly disseminated to the sector.

Recommendation 5: All residential aged care homes should have one or more trained infection control officers as a condition of accreditation. The training requirements for these officers should be set by the aged care advisory body we propose.

Recommendation 6: The Australian Government should arrange with the States and Territories to deploy accredited infection prevention and control experts into residential aged care homes to provide training, assist with the preparation of outbreak management plans and assist with outbreaks.

Read the 'Aged care and COVID-19: a special report' via <https://bit.ly/3lhSnTD>

Read the Federal ANMF media release <https://bit.ly/34lrFCA>

Read the Federal Aged Care Minister Richard Colbeck's media release <https://bit.ly/3jAnXvI>

Important PPE guidance and infection control links

1. DHHS infection control guidance page (**new**) <http://bit.ly/DHHSinfectioncontrol>
2. DHHS PPE guidance webpage <https://bit.ly/DHHSppe>
includes definitions of tiers and when N95 respirator masks should be worn
3. COVID-19 – PPE and levels of protection (20 July) <https://bit.ly/2G7VCO7>
4. DHHS COVID-19 – a guide to the conventional use of PPE (updated 27 August) <https://bit.ly/2yBnmaa>
5. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Infection Prevention and Control guideline (10 September) <https://bit.ly/3deTBLE>
6. DHHS COVID-19 - Disposing of clinical waste <https://bit.ly/2REJF5b>

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7. Personal Protective Equipment for the provision of mental health care (1 September) <https://bit.ly/2ALJgch>
8. PPE for community service providers for prevention of COVID-19 (29 September) <https://bit.ly/3hIsWt0>
9. Maternity and neonatal care during COVID-19 (8 September) <https://bit.ly/3aWCnmc>
10. Respiratory support for children during the COVID-19 emergency (updated 23 September) <https://bit.ly/3dcA2DL>
11. Assisting patients with hygiene care during coronavirus (COVID-19) – risk minimisation for staff (PDF) (1 October) **(new)** <https://bit.ly/2H0hknW>
12. WorkSafe Victoria Managing coronavirus (COVID-19) risks: Healthcare and social assistance industry – Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) <https://bit.ly/3ddwqRT>

Do you have a personal protective equipment concern?

ANMF continues to advocate and raise and resolve members' issues at the PPE taskforce union consultation meetings. **Members with concerns about PPE should:**

1. **continue to raise and submit OHS incident reports with your employer as well as speaking directly with your manager**
2. **involve your Health and Safety Rep if you have one**
3. **contact ANMF via anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance (include your report and response if applicable) for further support and advice if after you have raised your concerns they are not addressed by your employer.**

COVID-19 call out: be part of the nursing and midwifery exhibition

Victorian nurses and midwives are being asked to share their 'caring under COVID-19' experience and photographs as part of an exhibition to mark the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife.

The exhibition to be held at Her Place museum in East Melbourne will launch in early 2021. It is also expected to travel to regional Victoria.

Funded by the Victorian Government, the exhibition will be hosted in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services and Safer Care Victoria and is supported by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Victorian Branch). To participate, go to <https://bit.ly/caringundercovid>

Don't bring it home: guide to minimise the risk of infection

A reminder that ANMF (Vic Branch) has developed a guide to assist you in relation to returning home from work after a shift.

Job Reps and HSRs are encouraged to print the poster which is part of this PDF newsflash. You can also download the 'Protocols for entering your home and minimising the risk of infection' A4 poster via bit.ly/COVID19-DBIH

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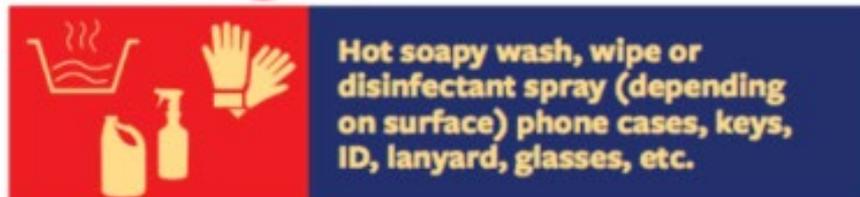


Protocols for entering your home and minimising the risk of infection.

-  **1** On entry, remove your shoes and place in a plastic box.
-  **2** Leave your bag, wallet, mobile, keys, etc in a box near the entry.
-  **3** Change out of your clothes immediately and wash them. Use the hottest possible machine wash setting and dryer if you can.
-  **4** Have a shower.
-  **5** Clean items you've brought in and surfaces you've touched.

Remember to wash your hands regularly.

Cleaning tips



Consider changing in and out of your uniform/scrubs at work.