



**Australian
Nursing &
Midwifery
Federation**

VICTORIAN BRANCH

Newsflash

Thursday 16 April 2020

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) Update #6

Testing expanded, no single-use PPE should be re-used or saved, nursing student employment model, immunisation service and HITH guidance and more mental health funding

Members are encouraged to read our newsflashes and the COVID-19 information for health workers provided on the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Commonwealth Department of Health websites.

Information is updated regularly and at short notice. 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 via anmfvic.asn.au/covid-19. Please read through the information on our website before submitting a question.

Member Assistance is no longer taking phone inquiries as ANMF staff are now working remotely. Members with complex inquiries will still have phone contact with staff.

ANMF has written to all private, not-for-profit, local government and stand-alone community health centre employers urging them to follow the DHHS advice in the *Coronavirus Guidance Note on Employment-Related Matters* (bit.ly/2UhDSU2).

Latest coronavirus statistics in Victoria

As of 15 April 2020, the Victorian Chief Health Officer reported:

8 new cases in Victoria confirmed overnight.

Of the 1,299 confirmed cases in Victoria, 1,137 people have recovered from the virus.

No new deaths were reported and 14 people have died in Victoria of COVID-19.

39 people are in Victorian hospitals with COVID-19, including 18 in intensive care.

More than 72,000 tests have been completed.

Authorised by Lisa Fitzpatrick ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary

View the latest Victorian statistics via bit.ly/34Et8Ug and the latest national statistics via bit.ly/2RyEXX1

Victorian Government widens COVID-19 testing

Testing criteria have been expanded to include all people with consistent clinical symptoms. This will assist in finding cases that are being transmitted in the community.

The clinical criteria have been narrowed due to removal of epidemiological criteria. Clinicians are advised to only test patients who meet the clinical testing criteria. There should be no exceptions.

Revised testing criteria include:

- fever OR chills in the absence of an alternative diagnosis that explains the clinical presentation
OR
- acute respiratory infection that is characterised by cough, sore throat or shortness of breath.

Testing is also recommended for people with new onset of other clinical symptoms consistent with COVID-19* AND who are close contacts of a confirmed case of COVID-19 or who have returned from overseas in the past 14 days.

*headache, myalgia, runny or stuffy nose, anosmia, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea

Healthcare workers and other frontline employees are able to have faster return of test results.

Victoria's state of emergency extended for four weeks

Victoria's state of emergency to manage the coronavirus crisis, which was due to end on 13 April, has been extended for four weeks.

Premier Daniel Andrews announced on 12 April that the state of emergency would extend to midnight on 11 May so the government could continue to enforce social distancing and isolation measures to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Personal protective equipment – no re-using advice is clear

ANMF continues to raise members' concerns about personal protective equipment at the weekly Safer Care Victoria committee.

The head of the Department of Health and Human Services PPE taskforce, Safer Care Victoria Chief Medical Officer Professor Andrew Wilson, provided clarification at the committee's last meeting.

Prof Wilson's advice, in response to ANMF members' inquiries to our Member Assistance team, included:

1. No health service should be re-using or re-purposing single-use personal protective equipment. This includes shields, goggles, aprons and masks.
2. Mechanisms are in place to collect some single-use PPE from health services, in particular masks and gowns. Research is being conducted on what PPE may be processed and re-used if required in a surge situation.

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3. No members should be directed to 'disinfect' or save their PPE.
4. No masks should be put in plastic bags and re-used later.

If your employer is asking you re-use or save single-use PPE, members should contact ANMF Member Assistance for advice and support via anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance

ANMF continues to raise PPE access concerns from some of our members working in local government, primary healthcare, and district and community health. These employers are being followed up by the DHHS.

Members and their employers should continue to refer to the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services personal protective guidance last updated on 3 April bit.ly/2Uzw9lp

These guidelines are also being provided to private acute employers for their implementation.

WorkSafe Victoria - infectious diseases guidance for the healthcare sector

In March, ANMF requested WorkSafe Victoria develop specific COVID-19 guidance for the healthcare sector and healthcare workers.

The COVID-19 specific guidance acknowledges healthcare employees working in health facilities and people's homes are at higher risk of exposure to COVID-19.

In the guidance, WorkSafe provides information about employers' duty to provide and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of employees. This includes preventing risks to health (including psychological health), and safety associated with potential exposure to COVID-19 as a result of providing healthcare and social assistance services in the current circumstances.

The guidance also states employees have a duty to take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety in the workplace and cooperate with any action employers take to comply with the *OHS Act* or regulations.

Read the 'Prevention and management of exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19) in the healthcare and social assistance industry' via bit.ly/2Vb1RG4

Victoria's undergraduate nursing employment model

If a surge workforce is required, more Bachelor of Nursing students will have the opportunity to consolidate their practical nursing skills and knowledge during the COVID-19 pandemic through the expansion of the Registered Undergraduate Students of Nursing (RUSON) employment model.

The RUSON model employs second-year and third-year students above the required nurse: patient ratio to undertake general nursing activities under the delegation and supervision of registered nurses.

Several Victorian health services have piloted the program in previous years, however with the increased workforce demand, it will be rolled out to additional Victorian health services.

To ensure all student are supported, ANMF (Vic Branch) has worked with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to produce [a kit of templates \(bit.ly/2K5ddoG\)](https://bit.ly/2K5ddoG) to support health services to implement the RUSON model consistently.

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The documents were based on [Ballarat Health Service's implementation \(bit.ly/2Vy3TyX\)](https://bit.ly/2Vy3TyX) The RUSON employment model is to be implemented in accordance with clause 106 of the *Nurses and Midwives (Victorian Public Health Sector) (Single Interest Employers) Enterprise Agreement 2016*.

RUSONs should be aware of these documents and the EBA clause to ensure they are receiving the appropriate support and working conditions.

ANMF has been working with the DHHS to ensure that all RUSONs are employed on short-term contracts and not as casuals, to ensure they have access to leave and other conditions.

New RUSONs should contact ANMF if they are being offered casual work or expected to perform tasks [outside the core activities list \(bit.ly/2XDQvfn\)](https://bit.ly/2XDQvfn) [PDF] that is included in our template documents.

Useful links:

- [Coronavirus – RUSON model \(bit.ly/2K5ddoG\)](https://bit.ly/2K5ddoG)
- [Nurturing our workforce – the RUSON model \(bit.ly/2Vy3TyX\)](https://bit.ly/2Vy3TyX)
- [Work as a nurse while you study \(bit.ly/2wHhgV6\)](https://bit.ly/2wHhgV6)

ANMF is advocating and working on the implementation of a similar program for registered undergraduate students of midwifery. Documentation is being finalised and will be available in the coming weeks.

Funding to mental health services to meet increased demand

The Victorian Government announced a \$59.4 million package to help mental health services meet increased demand due to coronavirus.

On Sunday 12 April Premier Daniel Andrews and Mental Health Minister Martin Foley said social distancing was 'flattening the curve' of coronavirus cases but was increasing demand for mental health services from people with existing and emerging mental health issues.

Almost a quarter of people calling Lifeline in the last few weeks have been seeking support due to coronavirus, and BeyondBlue predicts demand for their services will increase by nearly 30 per cent by June.

The government will provide \$17.8 million to begin the first phase of the roll out of 170 extra youth and adult acute mental health beds – a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, consistent with the ANMF submission and recommendations to the commission.

Nearly \$7 million will help mental health services deliver supports for people with severe mental illness via phone and video.

Another \$6.7 million will expand online and phone counselling services through BeyondBlue, Lifeline, Kids Helpline, Switchboard Victoria, and Suicide Line Victoria. This funding will boost the capacity of the Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council and Tandem helplines, which are also experiencing a large increase in calls.

Phones and extra data will be provided to vulnerable and high-risk clients of public mental health services, so they can stay engaged with treatment and services, and equipment and IT grants will be provided to community managed mental health services so they can offer their services remotely and respond to increased demand.

The package includes \$6 million to fast track Orygen Youth Health's new eOrygen platform, which will provide online therapy and peer support for young people.

Training, support and resources will be offered to frontline mental health workers.

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Read the Victorian Government media release via bit.ly/2yWtxWC

ANMF continues to meet with the Office of the Chief Mental Health Nurse and Mental Health Reform Victoria to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health sector and to advocate on behalf of our mental health nursing members.

Advice for immunisation services

The Department of Health and Human Services has developed a COVID-19 fact sheet for immunisation services which will be of particular interest to immunisation nurses, maternal and child health nurses and primary health practice nurses.

The DHHS says it is critical that all immunisation services continue to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic. It says services should implement alternative service delivery models which ensure the occupational health and safety of all staff and clients and enable compliance with transmission reduction measures recommended by DHHS.

Read the DHHS immunisation services factsheet (updated 13 April) via bit.ly/3eh4FJc

Hospital in the home advice

The Hospital in the Home (HITH) Society Australasia has published a 10-page document outlining the role, challenges and goals of HITH during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Role of Hospital in the Home for COVID-19 guidance is available on the ANMF (Vic Branch) COVID-19 other resources section on our website via anmfvic.asn.au/coronavirus/other-covid-19-information or directly from the HITH Society website hithsociety.org.au

Perinatal workplace wellbeing program COVID-19 resources

Members who are pregnant or a new parent may find the *Perinatal Workplace Wellbeing Program COVID-19* resources useful.

Members caring for pregnant women and new parents may also consider sharing the resources with their clients and patients.

The program is designed to support and make a difference to the mental health and wellbeing of expectant and new parents in Victorian workplaces. It is funded by WorkSafe's WorkWell Mental Health Improvement Fund.

Four new resources and two webinars are designed to help both employees and employers navigate these unprecedented times. Visit pwwp.org.au/resource/covid-19

Emergency dental care

Dentists have implemented Level 3 restrictions which means that all routine examinations and treatments should be deferred, and dentists should only provide urgent and emergency dental care. As a result, some dental practices have stopped seeing patients until the restrictions are lifted.

If members or your patients, clients or residents require urgent or emergency dental care visit the Australian Dental Association website to find a dentist still providing care at bit.ly/3bbHXQF

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New clinical assessment modules and an extra \$60 CPD online credit for members

A reminder that ANMF has launched a new series of clinical assessment online modules to support nurses wanting to develop their clinical skills in recognising and responding to acute clinical deterioration, including the COVID-19 patient. The six new one-hour modules are:

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 1 - Introduction to acute care / recognising and responding to clinical deterioration

anmfvic.asn.au/cam-1

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 2 - Airway management and unconsciousness

anmfvic.asn.au/cam-2

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 3 - Respiratory failure

anmfvic.asn.au/cam-3

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 4 – Oxygen therapy

anmfvic.asn.au/cam-4

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 5 – Hypotension

anmfvic.asn.au/cam-5

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 6 - Sepsis

anmfvic.asn.au/cam-6

All members receive annual credit to use on the ANMF (Vic Branch) CPD Portal. Full and part-time members receive a \$400 annual credit* (or \$120 for members on parental leave and \$80 for student members).

All ANMF members will receive an additional \$60 credit to use on the CPD Portal as a special member benefit during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To access the new online clinical assessment modules, visit cpd.anmfvic.asn.au

Let your colleagues know that ANMF has halved the module price to make it easier for any non-members to complete these important modules. Non-members should click 'non-member login' to log in or create an account.

*ANMF (Vic Branch) members' annual credit is renewed every July.

ANMF (Vic Branch) Education Centre virtual classroom courses

Information about some ANMF (Vic Branch) Education Centre courses moving to a virtual classroom was included in the last newsflash. In case you missed it – you can find these courses and registration links via

anmfvic.asn.au/virtualclassroom

Reorientation to acute care

As part of its efforts to assist in the preparation of an additional surge workforce, the ANMF (Vic Branch) continues to offer a two-day in-person course for nurses wanting to refresh their skills in the acute sector. More than 100

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nurses have attended the workshops and are prepared to work in hospitals in the event a surge workforce is required.

The workshops, funded by First State Super, HESTA and the ANMF, are provided at no cost to nurses.

To put your name on the waiting list visit anmfvic.asn.au/reorientation

COVID-19 hardship assistance for ANMF (Vic Branch) members

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a huge economic impact globally and some ANMF members may be experiencing financial hardship. The ANMF (Vic Branch) encourages members who are experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19 to contact us via this form: anmfvic.asn.au/COVID19hardship
All inquiries will be treated with the strictest confidence.



COVID-19
IMPORTANT
INFORMATION

for nurses, midwives and carers about coronavirus
anmfvic.asn.au/covid-19

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