



**Australian
Nursing &
Midwifery
Federation**
VICTORIAN BRANCH

Newsflash

Tuesday 21 April 2020

Important flu vaccination information for members working in aged care

Working in aged care? You must be vaccinated against influenza before 1 May 2020

Since 2017, it has been mandatory for providers of residential aged care to offer the flu vaccine to every worker. All Australian Government-subsidised residential aged care providers are required to offer staff and volunteers free access to annual flu vaccinations at the provider's cost.

Am I obliged to get the flu vaccine?

As notified in the 23 March publication *COVID-19 Plan for the Victorian Aged Care Sector* to work, or continue to work, in residential aged care you are required to have the flu vaccination by 30 April 2020. From 1 May 2020, staff, visitors and visiting workers who have not had a flu vaccination should not be permitted entry to a residential aged care facility.

What if I have a medical reason for not having the flu vaccination?

The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services document *Influenza vaccination advice for residential aged care staff and visitors* says that staff who are unable to have the vaccination for medical reasons need to have evidence from a medical practitioner. You can find the document on the Victorian Government's web page about the aged care sector and coronavirus via bit.ly/dhscovid19

What if I don't want to have the flu vaccination?

The department's Influenza vaccination advice for residential aged care staff and visitors says staff 'who choose to not have an influenza vaccination are unable to work in residential aged care facilities during the state of emergency period.'

Authorised by Lisa Fitzpatrick ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary

It is still an individual's right to refuse the flu vaccination, but you will not be allowed to work in residential aged care without it. A direction by your employer that you have the flu vaccination would generally be considered a 'lawful and reasonable' direction that you must comply with to keep your job.

What if I genuinely have a medical condition that means I cannot have the flu vaccination?

You must provide that evidence to your employer as soon as possible. Please seek ANMF advice as the effect on you, as your employment rights will be different depending on your situation. ANMF can be contacted via anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance

My employer wants evidence that I have had the flu vaccination

A register of all staff and their vaccination status must be maintained by your employer, including the date and type of vaccine given. The immunisation provider must report each administration of seasonal influenza vaccine to the Australian Immunisation Register record for each recipient. You can secure an immunisation history statement straight away using either:

- your [Medicare online account](#) through [myGov](#)
- [Express Plus Medicare mobile app](#).

If you can't use Medicare online, your vaccination provider can print your immunisation history statement for you.

Approved providers should seek appropriate evidence of immunisation status from individuals seeking to enter the residential aged care facility. Appropriate evidence may be a statement or record from a health practitioner; or an immunisation history statement available from Medicare online or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app.

How will compliance with these requirements be assessed?

State and territory law enforcement agencies will enforce these directions. Persons who fail to comply with any of the directions could face penalties including fines for individuals and for bodies corporate.

NMBA position on nurses and vaccination

As registered health practitioners, nurses may be the subject of a complaint to AHPRA. Any published anti-vaccination material and/or advice which is false, misleading or deceptive which is being distributed by a registered nurse, enrolled nurse or midwife (including via social media) may constitute a summary offence under the National Law and could result in prosecution by AHPRA.

The NMBA states it will consider whether the nurse or midwife has breached their professional obligations and will treat these matters seriously.

For more information read the Federal ANMF Vaccination and Immunisation Policy via bit.ly/39ORWdd

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