

Wednesday 15 September 2021

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Update 55

New pop-up mental health services and mental health workforce support; priority Pfizer vaccination for healthcare workers' household contacts

Victorian COVID-19 cases on 15 September: there are 4038 active cases, including 423 new locally acquired cases. Two people have died. There are 173 patients in hospital, including 44 in ICU, with 22 on ventilators. Data links are at the end of this newsflash.

\$22 million for more mental health services and mental health workforce supports

ANMF has welcomed the Victorian Government's \$22 million package to fast-track tailored mental health care to support Victorians, support the mental health workforce and to relieve the pressure on emergency departments.

Twenty regional and metropolitan pop-up community mental health services, with 90 clinicians, will provide an extra 93,000 hours of wellbeing checks and counselling. These centres will be operated by community health providers including Mind, cohealth and EACH. The pop-up services will start opening at the end of September. They will have a dedicated triage, referral hotline and website to be established in coming days so people can start booking appointments.

Funding also includes \$1 million to support the mental health workforce respond to patients presenting with trauma and \$1.5 million to enable the Royal Children's Hospital, Vichealth and key partners to better respond to vulnerable children and young people.

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency will receive an additional \$4 million to self-determine the best, most culturally appropriate response to the mental health and wellbeing needs of their local communities.

Read the media release <https://bit.ly/3zcbIS4>

Authorised by Lisa Fitzpatrick ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary

Priority Pfizer appointments for healthcare workers' household contacts

From 13 September the Victorian Government is providing priority Pfizer bookings for household contacts, including young people aged 12 years and over, of someone (clinical or non-clinical) who:

- works on COVID/streaming wards
- is likely to interact with SCOVID/COVID patients – (e.g. intensive care units, emergency departments). This includes ancillary staff such as radiographers and allied health.

Attestation can be verbal or a signed eligibility declaration form. Priority bookings can only be made via the **Coronavirus Hotline 1800 675 398**

Reserved pregnancy vaccine appointments

From 12 September, pregnant women can access reserved Pfizer appointments if:

- they are in the later stages of pregnancy – from 24 weeks' gestation or
- their health care provider has determined their pregnancy is complicated or high risk.

This change is to ensure pregnant women who are at higher risk of complications if they get COVID-19 are easily able to access COVID-19 vaccines. Pregnant nurses, midwives and aged care personal care workers have had priority Pfizer access since July and continue to have access to reserved appointments.

Bookings can be made via the **Coronavirus Hotline 1800 675 398**

Vaccination program now includes 12- to 15-year-olds

Young people aged 12 to 15 years became eligible for the COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine on Wednesday 15 September. The change is in line with Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation's updated advice published on 9 September <https://bit.ly/3zbDwRg>

Vaccination for this group will be available through state vaccination centres, doctors' clinics, and community health services. In-reach services to schools and community pop ins are planned to support vaccine uptake.

Bookings can be made via the **Coronavirus Hotline 1800 675 398** and <https://portal.cvms.vic.gov.au/>

Pop up vaccination clinics in areas of need

The Victorian Government is launching a community pop-up vaccination program to take vaccines where they are needed most. The immediate focus of the new program will be in Melbourne's northern and western suburbs.

Five community pop-ups will be based in the Hume, Dandenong and Casey local government areas and will be hosted in council and religious settings to offer tailored support for local diverse communities.

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The first eight school pop-up clinics will be at Dandenong High School, Point Cook Secondary College, Gladstone Park Secondary College, Roxburgh College, Brunswick Secondary College, Tarneit Senior College, Werribee Secondary College and Lakeview Senior College.

Read the media release <https://bit.ly/2XnPYAk>

Reserved Pfizer vaccination appointments for nurses, midwives and carers

ANMF continues to strongly encourage all nurses, midwives and aged care personal care workers to get vaccinated.

The Chief Health Officer Directives require those working in public and private aged care to have at least a first dose of the vaccine prior to 17 September 2021 or evidence of a first vaccination booking before 1 October.

For information on centres visit www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccination-centres

Public sector nurses and midwives have access to half a day's paid leave to have your vaccination and up to four days special leave if you have symptoms after receiving your vaccine that prevent you from attending work. The public sector enterprise agreement personal leave evidence requirements apply.

Casual private aged care nurses and personal care workers can access, through your employer, an \$80 payment per vaccination dose. Casual staff who become unwell after vaccination and do not have other leave entitlements can access one day's paid leave (at a rate of \$185).

Regardless of age nurses, midwives and carers are eligible to receive the Pfizer vaccine at a Victorian Government vaccine hub. Use the phone number or online appointment link below to access the Pfizer priority appointments.

To access a reserved appointment, call the Victorian Government Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398 and tell the hotline operator you are a health care worker or aged care worker.

Victorian Department of Health employment advice

The Victorian Department of Health's 'Coronavirus Guidance Note on Employment-Related Matters' – provides advice on leave, including special paid leave and vaccination leave and re-deployment. ANMF encourages all employers to follow this guidance, however, recognise that enforcement is limited to public sector employers only.

The guidance, last updated 22 August 2021, can be read via <https://bit.ly/2UhDSU2>

How to access ANMF support

Members are encouraged complete an online Member Assistance inquiry form via anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance (scroll to the bottom of the page).

Personal protective equipment concern?

Members with concerns about PPE should:

1. **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

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3. contact ANMF via <https://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.

Exposure sites

Check this page regularly <https://bit.ly/35YOUuv>

Do you live with a close contact?

If you have a close contact living in your household, you are a secondary contact and must quarantine until they are told they can leave quarantine. More information via <https://bit.ly/2TqAQ3t>

Where can I get tested for COVID-19?

Please get tested even with the slightest of symptoms. Testing site information <https://bit.ly/2TB9eZ9>

\$450 test and isolation payment

The Victorian Government provides a \$450 test and isolation payment to workers required to isolate after taking a COVID-19 test who don't have access to paid leave. More information, eligibility, and applications <https://bit.ly/3fWygqQ>

\$1500 disaster leave payment

The Federal Government provides a \$1500 disaster leave payment if you tested positive or were identified as a close contact and must isolate for 14 days. Private aged care workers are eligible for the payment if you do not have access to paid leave during your isolation period. Call 180 22 66 to make a claim. More information, eligibility, and applications <https://bit.ly/3bWnfXG>

Emergency accommodation for healthcare workers

The Victorian Government provides the 'frontline accommodation program' for health care workers if they need support to quarantine or isolate safely. Private aged care nurses and personal care workers are eligible to access this program. For details <https://bit.ly/2X6cABJ>

COVID-19 important links for nurses, midwives and personal care workers

ANMF continues to collate the important links all in one place, so you don't have to go looking. Please bookmark and check this page regularly – <https://anmfvic.asn.au/COVID-19>

Latest COVID-19 statistics

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Victorian COVID-19 data dashboard <https://bit.ly/3j5vJwC>
Healthcare Worker COVID-19 data dashboard <https://bit.ly/3jQT5q4>
Victorian Chief Health Officer daily update <https://bit.ly/34Et8Ug>
Victorian Chief Health Officer daily media release <https://bit.ly/2EDiQLb>
Victorian Government's vaccination data dashboard <https://bit.ly/319HzPg>

Federal Government national COVID-19 data <https://bit.ly/3spz67F>
Federal Government's national and aged care vaccination data <https://bit.ly/3spRSM5>

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

The ANMF (Vic Branch) 'Don't bring it home' guide is designed to assist members returning home from work after a shift. Job Reps and HSRs are encouraged to download and print the 'Protocols for entering your home and minimising the risk of infection' A4 poster [PDF] via bit.ly/COVID19-DBIH

ANMF Job Reps and Health and Safety Reps are encouraged to display this newsflash on their workplace noticeboard.




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

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- Hot soapy wash, wipe or disinfectant spray (depending on surface) phone cases, keys, ID, lanyard, glasses, etc.

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