

Wednesday 2 February 2022

## **CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)** **Update #69**

### **COVID hospital surge support allowance extended**

The COVID hospital surge support allowance has been extended to 31 March 2022. The per shift allowance came into effect on 11 October 2021 and was due to end on 10 February 2022.

Premier Daniel Andrews confirmed the extension of the allowance at a virtual meeting of ANMF Job Reps held on 2 February 2022. The Job Reps represented Northern Health, Monash Health, Barwon Health, Ballarat Health, The Women's, Western Health, Melbourne Health, Austin Health and maternal and child health nurses.

Job Reps attending the meeting were able to share their own and their colleagues' experiences with Premier Andrews about what it has been like working as a nurse or a midwife over the pandemic years and particularly during the last few weeks of the current crisis.

ANMF has been advocating for an allowance extension and has previously advised members that the per shift allowance was unlikely to end during a surge.

The extension will cost \$85 million and will apply on the same terms as the current allowance.

Some private sector acute nurses and midwives, for example Epworth Richmond, have also been eligible for a surge allowance since January 2022. ANMF continues to strongly advocate at every opportunity for a broader application of the allowance and for private employers to also take some responsibility for paying a similar allowance to their nurses and midwives.

Federal ANMF is also campaigning for the Morrison Government to fund a per shift COVID surge support allowance for private aged care nurses and personal care workers. The government has announced a 'bonus' of up to \$800, in two instalments, which will not address the low pay rates in private aged care, nor compensate for the enormous strain systemically understaffed nurses and personal care workers are under.

Read the Federal ANMF media release 'Staff shortage emergency requires more than a two-payment bonus' via <https://bit.ly/34bb203>

Authorised by Lisa Fitzpatrick ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary

## **ANMF seeks extension to elective surgery pause**

ANMF is calling for an extension to the statewide elective surgery pause to provide a critical buffer so a beyond exhausted workforce can recover and recharge. Being told to just keep going with no end in sight and no annual leave approved is unsustainable.

The pause has enabled theatre nurses to be redeployed to wards critical to caring for the influx of COVID patients. To restart elective surgery now would mean sending those nurses back to theatre, leaving the already understaffed COVID areas with even less staff.

ANMF is advocating strongly for the pause because the last two years and the last few weeks have been brutal on our members. Working in the surge workforce team models, with students and allied health replacing nurses and midwives, has been necessary, but extremely challenging.

We need more time to assess the peak and the impact of the start of the school year. Most importantly we need time to assess the needs of the nursing and midwifery workforce and ensure that you are able to take a decent break to recharge and recover.

ANMF has sent a survey via email and text message to all public sector members to understand their surge workforce and leave experiences so we can advocate on behalf of all members.

Read the ANMF media release: 'Nurses and midwives are not robots: maintain elective surgery pause' (2 Feb 2022) via <https://bit.ly/3GkZg0s>

## **Need ANMF advice or support?**

Members can complete an online Member Assistance inquiry form via <https://anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance> (scroll to the bottom of the page).

## **Covid-stressed?**

ANMF reminds members they have free access to the independent, confidential Nursing and Midwifery Health Program which provides support, counselling and referrals.

Not ready to call? Reflect on your circumstances and wellbeing and fill out the NMHPV's self-care plan questionnaire via <https://bit.ly/343qHLf>. You will be emailed a self-care plan.

Contact NMHPV on 9415 7551 or email [admin@nmhp.org.au](mailto:admin@nmhp.org.au). Find out more <https://www.nmhp.org.au>

## **Important COVID-19 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>

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

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