

Thursday 23 July 2020

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) Update #16

\$300 workers support payment while isolating and waiting for test results; support for nurses, midwives and carers; and surge preparations

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. 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 anmfvic.asn.au/covid-19. 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 20 July.

Latest coronavirus statistics in Victoria

As of 23 July 2020, the Chief Health Officer reported:

- the state's number of COVID-19 cases was 7,125 – there were 403 new cases since the day before.
- Of the new cases, 69 are linked to known outbreaks and 334 remain under investigation.
- 201 people are in Victorian hospitals with COVID-19, including 40 in intensive care. 49 people have died, including five deaths since yesterday.
- There are 3630 active cases.
- 27,151 tests were undertaken yesterday bringing the total since 1 January to 1,413,115

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

Support payment if you need to wait for COVID-19 test results

Nurses, midwives and personal care workers may be able to access the Victorian Government's new \$300 worker support payment in the event they have COVID-19 symptoms or are a close contact and must isolate while waiting for test results.

Any Victorian in paid work is eligible for the payment if they do not have access to paid leave.

Premier Daniel Andrews announced the payment on 23 July as part of a package to support people faced with the terrible choice of isolating or going to work so they can put food on the table.

To apply you will need to provide a pay slip or statutory declaration. Payments will be made quickly.

If you test positive and need to isolate for 14 days, and don't have access to paid leave, you will be eligible for a \$1500 payment

To apply for the payment call 1800 675 398.

Find a testing location on the Department of Health and Human Services website <https://bit.ly/3f6u6xF>

Uncertain times for nurses, midwives and personal care workers

It is understandable that members may be concerned about the number of healthcare workers testing positive to COVID-19 and the number of colleagues needing to isolate.

The increased number of COVID-19 patients in our hospitals and in the community is also increasing the pressure on nurses and midwives. The outbreaks in private and not-for-profit aged care facilities are devastating for nurses and personal care workers.

Everyone is feeling fatigued from the impacts of living with the pandemic and now dealing with this outbreak.

ANMF understands the Department of Health and Human Services and Safer Care Victoria are working to understand the source of transmission in each healthcare worker case.

It is important to remember there is increased community transmission and that nurses, midwives and carers also live in the community. That's why the community following stage 3 restrictions is so important.

There are risks at work.

If you are in one of the higher-risk categories, then talk to your employer about redeployment. If you are unable to reach a mutually common-sense arrangement, then contact ANMF Member Assistance.

ANMF is here if you have any issues with access to personal protective equipment. ANMF attends the regular PPE taskforce health unions committee and a regular briefing with the Department of Health and Human Services and Health Minister Jenny Mikakos. We are raising and resolving members' PPE issues and concerns at these meetings. If you have any PPE issue contact ANMF Member Assistance.

ANMF also encourages nurses, midwives and carers to follow the 'Protocols for entering your home and minimizing the risk of infection' developed by ANMF (Vic Branch).

Nurses and midwives, who need to isolate or live with higher-risk family members can access hotel accommodation. Victorian Health Minister Jenny Mikakos is in discussions with the Federal Government, which

Authorised by Lisa Fitzpatrick ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary

regulates and funds private and not-for-profit aged care, about making this alternative accommodation available to nurses and carers in this sector. We hope to have details soon.

What if I am not coping?

This is a difficult time particularly for nurses, midwives and personal carers. The community has high expectations that you will be there for them. The Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews refers to nurses as the 'last line of defence'. You are highly regarded professionals, but you also have your own families, loved ones and are dealing with the day-to-day living of a pandemic just like everyone else.

If you are not coping, the Nursing and Midwifery Health Program Victoria is there for you. The Andrews Government has provided the NMHPV with additional funding during the pandemic. This means counselling, support and referral services are also available for personal care workers during COVID-19.

To find out more about NMHPV services visit <https://www.nmhp.org.au/> or call 9415 7551.

What about a surge workforce?

Victoria is well prepared in the event there is a need for additional surge workforce. Pandemic workforce plans include:

- Almost 30 per cent of the 15,000 plus strong DHHS pandemic surge workforce register are nurses.
- The Federal Government has funded critical care education for thousands of experienced acute sector registered nurses and refresher programs for registered and enrolled nurses who were not currently in clinical practice.
- The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia established a pandemic sub-register to fast-track the return to practice of experienced and qualified nurses and midwives who had become unregistered in the past three years.
- Almost 150 school nurses, maternal and child health nurses, aged care nurses and others in non-acute settings attended the ANMF Reorientation to acute care workshop. Each one of those nurses has signed up to work at hospitals near their home in the event they are needed.

Unquestionably our experience tells us that more nurses and midwives will come forward if asked and required.

Take every educated precaution. Seek NMHPV support if you need it. If there are staffing or PPE issues at work contact ANMF Member Assistance for advice, support and representation.

We must stay calm and focused to get this job done.

See letter of support from your South Australian ANMF colleagues <https://bit.ly/2CY2trU>

Additional support for members

To provide additional support to members during this time select ANMF staff will be available on the weekend, between 8.45 and 5pm, starting Saturday 25 July for any urgent issues. To reach the on-call weekend contact call the ANMF office number on 9275 9333.

Authorised by Lisa Fitzpatrick ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary

Protect yourself, protect your patients and residents

The Department of Health and Human Services *COVID-19 - Guidance Physical distancing in health services* (15 July) document provides advice to all health service staff (clinical and non-clinical) on physical distancing measures to protect their own health and that of patients, carers and visitors. It applies to any clinical and non-clinical setting in a health service. The clinical and other recommendations are examples of how the general principles can be applied to your setting.

Read the guidance via <https://bit.ly/3eSctLU>

More beds for COVID-19 patients

On 16 July Health Minister Jenny Mikakos advised the Victorian health system had an additional 1000 spaces for ICU and critical care beds as part of its pandemic response. Additional beds are coming online each week. Works are underway on converting more treatment spaces.

The additional capacity includes 84 beds at the former Peter McCallum Centre building, now known as St Vincent's on the Park, which has been re-commissioned at a cost of \$30 million.

The Victorian Government will pause all category 3 elective surgery in metropolitan Melbourne to preserve bed and workforce capacity in the event there is an increase in patients with COVID-19.

The government says more beds have been delivered at Casey Hospital, Baxter House in Geelong, Bendigo Hospital and Shepparton Hospital to ensure patients can continue to get the care they need no matter where they live.

Should demand for ICU beds surge, plans are in place to convert a thousand more critical care spaces to treat coronavirus cases within our hospitals. This includes upgrading operating theatres, recovery and other ward areas, emergency department spaces, and if really required, more beds can be opened in modular facilities in hospital carparks.

There are more than 1200 ventilators currently in Victorian health services, hundreds more ready to deploy in the warehouse if needed and thousands more on order – as well as more than a thousand IV pumps and hundreds of patient monitors.

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

Elective surgery paused

On 16 July Health Minister Jenny Mikakos announced elective surgery will be reduced to no more than 50 per cent of usual activity across all public hospitals and 75 per cent in private hospitals. Private hospitals can continue to take on public category one and urgent category two surgery.

There are no changes to elective surgery in regional Victoria, but the government continues to ensure these hospitals are well prepared.

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

New testing and isolation policy for elective surgery patients

On 14 July Health Minister Jenny Mikakos announced all public and private patients will be tested for COVID-19 a week before their elective surgery to protect patients and healthcare workers from the risk of infection.

Elective surgery patients will be required to self-isolate until their surgery. If a patient tests positive their surgery will be postponed until they have recovered unless it is urgent.

The screening policy does not apply to emergency surgery patients and current COVID-19 screening protocols will remain in place.

Revised maternity services visitor limits

On 23 July Health Minister Jenny Mikakos announced a woman's partner or support person is able to attend during labour and birth of a baby and can visit for two hours post birth. Minister Mikakos said the government was trying to strike a balance between 'compassion and safety'.

The new rules are available in the updated DHHS document *Maternity and neonatal care during coronavirus* (COVID-19) via <https://bit.ly/32MulEI>

Updated guidance for maternal and child health services

The Department of Health and Human Services and the Municipal Association of Victoria have issued updated guidance about face masks for maternal and child health services.

- COVID-19 update for MCH service providers in local government areas metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire (22 July) <https://bit.ly/39iQilJ>
- COVID-19 update MCH providers in regional and rural local government areas – excluding Mitchell Shire (22 July) <https://bit.ly/3htyaZ0>
- MCH services COVID-19 frequently asked questions <https://bit.ly/2ZUGZ8x>

Updated guidance for mental health services

The Department of Health and Human Services has issued *COVID-19 Mental Health Response & Recovery*, its 14th clinical mental health system communique. The document covers a range of issues including infection control, updated restrictions and advice on face masks, and translated resources.

Read *COVID-19 Mental Health Response & Recovery* via <https://bit.ly/2CYE5X8>

Support for private aged care residents, nurses and personal care workers

The outbreaks in private residential aged care are of concern to everyone. The role understaffing in this sector has played must be scrutinised by the royal commission. Aged care nurses and personal care workers have our respect and support at this extraordinarily challenging time.

A range of measures have been announced to ensure private and not-for-profit aged care providers are equipped to minimise the spread of COVID-19 and can continue to provide care to residents and older Victorians. The sector is funded and regulated by the Federal Government.

Authorised by Lisa Fitzpatrick ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary

The Victorian Government, Federal Government, industry stakeholders and unions, including ANMF (Vic Branch) are working together to ensure residents are protected and nurses, carers and other private aged care workers are not financially penalised because of the requirements to work in a single facility. ANMF is sending more detailed newsflashes to private, not-for-profit aged care and agency members.

Measures include:

1. More infection control training.
2. An agreed industry/union program to ensure aged care workers work in a single aged care facility where possible. **ANMF is issuing separate more detailed newsflashes to private, not-for-profit aged care and agency members as new information becomes available.**
3. Additional testing in aged care facilities and priority contact tracing for aged care residents and nurses, carers and other aged care staff.
4. Private hospitals will be available to open wards for aged care residents requiring medical care or who cannot safely isolate in their facilities.

Federal Government funding to:

1. Ensure aged care employers can cover additional entitlements to enable employees to work at a single site.
2. Engage and employ additional staff when existing employees are unable to work due to self-isolation requirements or a different skill mix is required.
3. Support aged care nurses, carers and other aged care workers who are unable to work due to symptoms, self-isolation or travel restrictions, regardless of whether they would usually receive paid leave.
4. Provide alternative accommodation so workers who live or work in hotspots can continue to work.

Private and not-for-profit aged care nurses and personal care workers who need to wait for test results, and do not have access to paid leave, can access the Victorian Government's \$300 worker support payment and the \$1500 payment if they test positive. To apply for the payment call 1800 675 398.

Read the Victorian Government media release <https://bit.ly/39cJCW2>

Read the Federal Government media release <https://bit.ly/3juZlyX>

Masks and face coverings mandatory for Melbourne and Mitchell Shire

Masks and face coverings became mandatory for everyone living in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire from 11.59pm, Wednesday 22 July.

Studies have recently shown that, even when factoring in imperfections and human error, wearing face masks can reduce transmission of coronavirus by around 60 per cent. Before this study, advice around the effectiveness of face masks in reducing transmission has been contradictory and lacking in evidence.

The Victorian Government is ordering more than two million reusable masks and an additional million single-use masks. Information about how the new rules work are on the DHHS website via <https://bit.ly/3jGlCbo>

Employer obligations to provide face masks to their employees in the workplace is detailed in this WorkSafe Guidance <https://bit.ly/3eMIPO0>

Authorised by Lisa Fitzpatrick ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary

Victorian state of emergency extended

On 19 July the Victorian Health Minister, Jenny Mikakos, announced she was extending Victoria's state of emergency until 11.59pm on 16 August 2020.

Personal protective equipment update

ANMF continues to 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 their 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.**

Please see our 'Protocols for entering your home and minimising the risk of infection' poster at the end of this newsflash.

Important PPE guidance and information links

Members are encouraged to read and access the following PPE guidance:

1. Department of Health and Human Services PPE webpage via <https://bit.ly/DHHSppe>
2. DHHS *Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Infection Prevention and Control guideline* (21 June) via <https://bit.ly/3deTBLE>
3. DHHS *COVID-19 – PPE and levels of protection* (20 May) via <https://bit.ly/2X7pBM7>
4. DHHS *COVID-19 – a guide to the conventional use of PPE* (updated 20 May) via <https://bit.ly/2yBnmaa>
5. DHHS *Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the provision of mental health care* (PDF) (4 June) via <https://bit.ly/2ALJgch>
6. DHHS *Personal protective equipment (PPE) for Maternity and Neonatal Services* (Word) <https://bit.ly/2yN9dqN>
7. DHHS *Respiratory support for children during the COVID-19 emergency* (updated 27 May) via <https://bit.ly/3dcA2DL>
8. *Access to personal protective equipment: information for residential aged care facilities in Victoria* <https://bit.ly/3fv1dLn>
9. *What personal protective equipment to use and when: residential aged care: Coronavirus (COVID-19) update* (17 June) <https://bit.ly/38VB0Da>
Information includes when PPE is required, options to secure PPE, and in which circumstances various PPE options should be used.
10. WorkSafe Victoria *Managing coronavirus (COVID-19) risks: Healthcare and social assistance industry – Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE)* via <https://bit.ly/3ddwqRT>

Authorised by Lisa Fitzpatrick ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary

ANMF (Vic Branch) CPD Portal - clinical assessment modules

The ANMF (Vic Branch) Education Centre's series of clinical assessment online modules support nurses wanting to develop their clinical skills in recognising and responding to acute clinical deterioration, including the COVID-19 patient. The 12 one-hour modules on the CPD Portal 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

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 7 – Non-invasive ventilation

anmfvic.asn.au/cam-7

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 8 – Mechanical ventilation

anmfvic.asn.au/cam-8

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 9 – Arterial blood gasses

anmfvic.asn.au/cam-9

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 10 – Advanced ventilation

anmfvic.asn.au/cam-10

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 11 – Advanced ventilation (prone)

anmfvic.asn.au/cam-11

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 12 – CXR interpretation

anmfvic.asn.au/cam-12

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). Credit is renewed every July.

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.

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

Authorised by Lisa Fitzpatrick ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary

ANMF (Vic Branch) Education Centre virtual classroom courses

The ANMF (Vic Branch) Education Centre continues to adapt courses and seminars to a virtual classroom platform via Zoom. You can find these courses and registration links via anmfvic.asn.au/virtualclassroom. Upcoming courses include:

July

- [Palliative care for older people: when to begin?](https://bit.ly/3cWhpmP) – 29 July
bit.ly/3cWhpmP
- [Safe medication administration](https://bit.ly/37JGFvx) – 29 July & 5 August
<https://bit.ly/37JGFvx>

August

- [Law and ethics for midwives, registered and enrolled nurses](https://bit.ly/2MRo3jv) – 5 & 6 August
bit.ly/2MRo3jv
- [ECG – cardiac rhythm recognition and 12-lead ECG](https://bit.ly/2UD6tUH) – 14 August
bit.ly/2UD6tUH
- [Advanced skills for dementia: different responses for different types](https://bit.ly/2MShpcY) – 26 August
bit.ly/2MShpcY
- [Certificate IV in Training and Assessment](https://anmfvic.asn.au/tae)
anmfvic.asn.au/tae

September

- [Documentation, the principles of best practice](https://bit.ly/3dWr2mC) – 9 September
bit.ly/3dWr2mC
- [Older people have families too: how to care for them](https://bit.ly/2zngiyC) – 30 September
bit.ly/2zngiyC

October

- [Certificate IV in Training and Assessment](https://anmfvic.asn.au/tae)
anmfvic.asn.au/tae

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 the 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

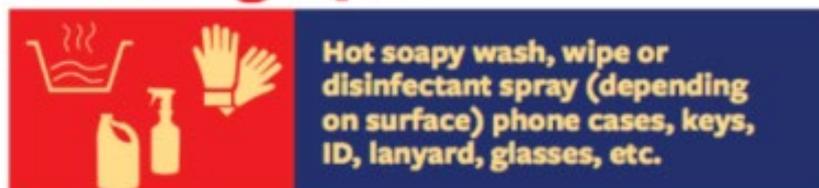


Protocols for entering your home and minimising the risk of infection.

-  **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.