



**Australian  
Nursing &  
Midwifery  
Federation**

VICTORIAN BRANCH

# Newsflash

Wednesday 8 April 2020

## **CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) Update #5**

**ANMF Easter opening hours, free hotel accommodation,  
aged care worker retention payments, registration renewal CPD requirements relaxed  
and new clinical assessment online modules for members**

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](https://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](https://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 from home. Members with complex inquiries will still have phone contact with staff.

The following is based on state and federal health department information. 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](https://bit.ly/2UhDSU2)).

### **ANMF Easter operating hours**

ANMF has increased its Easter operating hours to ensure we can continue to provide services and support to members during this period.

ANMF (Vic Branch) will be closed on the Good Friday public holiday on 10 April. An industrial officer will be on call for urgent matters over Good Friday and the Easter weekend. Non urgent queries should continue to be made via [anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance](https://anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance).

The Branch is traditionally closed on both Easter Monday and Easter Tuesday, however, staff will be working on both Easter Monday 13 April and Easter Tuesday 14 April to continue to provide support to members.

Authorised by Lisa Fitzpatrick ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary

## Private acute elective surgery wind back

ANMF continues to seek detail about the arrangements between the federal and state governments to enable the public and private health services to operate as 'one system' for the duration of the pandemic – as far as they relate to employment matters, particularly for those working in the private acute sector.

We continue to represent affected members and we will provide more information about the impact of the announcements on members as soon as possible.

## Education announcements and impact on nurses, midwives and carers

On Monday 7 April Premier Daniel Andrews and the Minister for the Coordination of Education and Training – COVID-19, James Merlino, announced that following advice from the Chief Health Officer all Victorian government primary, secondary and special schools will move to remote and flexible learning and teaching.

On-site learning will only be available for children whose parents cannot work from home and vulnerable students without access to a suitable learning environment at home.

ANMF is seeking more detail about the impact of this decision on nurses, midwives and carers, and the type of paid leave available if your child's school is not opening for the children of essential workers.

Read the Victorian Government's media release [bit.ly/3bZi0rN](https://bit.ly/3bZi0rN)

## Flu vaccination more important than ever

All nurses and midwives are strongly encouraged to have the flu vaccination through programs provided by their employer or where that is not possible, their local GP or pharmacist.

The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services has assured ANMF that there is enough supply of the vaccine for healthcare workers, particularly those working in Victorian public health facilities.

The Federal Government, which is responsible for aged care, says the flu vaccination is mandatory from 1 May for all residential aged care employees and visitors. ANMF is seeking confirmation of that date from the government.

Nurses, midwives and carers with a medical reason preventing you from receiving the annual flu vaccination should ensure that you have advice from your treating GP to provide to your employer in the event it is requested.

The Andrews Government's Health Services Amendment (Mandatory Vaccination of Healthcare Workers) Bill 2020 has passed parliament and is awaiting royal assent. ANMF understands that the law will not come into effect until 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic disruptions. This delay will enable the appropriate consultation with stakeholders and give employers time to implement the necessary arrangements.

ANMF supports vaccination to protect the health of nurses, midwives and carers, and their patients and clients.

ANMF advocates that it is vitally important employees are supported to achieve full vaccination and in circumstances where full vaccination is not possible, based on the exemptions outlined in the Bill, that an employee is not disadvantaged.

ANMF does not support punitive measures as effective means to promote vaccination.

For more information read the Federal ANMF Vaccination and Immunisation Policy via [bit.ly/39ORWdd](https://bit.ly/39ORWdd)

Authorised by Lisa Fitzpatrick ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary

## Free hotel rooms for nurses and midwives who require isolation

Nurses and midwives will be able to access free hotel rooms if they test positive to COVID-19 or are required to self-isolate under a new Victorian Government initiative.

Premier Daniel Andrews and Health Minister Jenny Mikakos announced the alternative accommodation plan on Sunday 5 April.

The initiative will provide some relief to the nurses and midwives who are on the frontline and are most at risk, who need to isolate and are concerned about sharing their home with family and housemates.

ANMF is aware some health services have already been assisting nurses and midwives at a local level with alternative accommodation.

ANMF is seeking clarification about whether the program extends to aged care nurses and carers and nurse in GP clinics.

### How do I access the accommodation program?

Contact your employer and ask for details. If you require further assistance from ANMF after you have made contact with your employer, please complete an online Member Assistance inquiry form ([anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance](https://anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance)) and include your employer's response.

### I have already paid for alternative accommodation, am I eligible for reimbursement?

Contact your employer and confirm you meet the criteria for accessing accommodation assistance. If you do, you'll need to provide your employer with receipts for accommodation, food and drink and request reimbursement. Reimbursement may not cover all your costs if they are more than the arrangements secured by the Victorian government. If you require ANMF assistance after you have made contact with your employer, please complete an online Member Assistance inquiry form ([anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance](https://anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance)) and include any information provided by your employer.

## Free childcare for three months

The Federal Government has made childcare free for three months from 6 April, to remove access issues for people working during the COVID-19 crisis.

The government is encouraging childcare centres to prioritise access to children of working parents, vulnerable and disadvantaged children, and parents with existing enrolments.

The \$1.6 billion funding will be paid direct to the centres, with the condition they remain open, so parents do not have the disruption of having to seek out another provider. The new arrangements will also extend to after school and school holiday services.

The usual funding system – including the means test and the activity test – has been temporarily scrapped and instead the government will pay half the childcare sector's revenue up to the existing hourly rate cap. Free childcare may extend beyond the three-month period. Read more: [bit.ly/2RdAatO](https://bit.ly/2RdAatO)

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## Federal Government aged care employee retention bonus

On 20 March the Federal Government announced it would support the aged care sector workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic by paying a retention bonus for aged care workers, at a cost of \$234.9 million.

- Full-time direct care workers in residential care facilities will receive a payment of up to \$800 after tax per quarter, paid for two quarters.
- Workers who provide in the home care will receive two payments of up to \$600 after tax per quarter, for two quarters.
- Part-time direct care workers receive a pro-rata payment for the amount of time you work. For example, if you work two days a week, you'll receive 40 per cent of the payment.

Payments will be made **via your employer** with the first payment expected in June (for the preceding quarter). The second payment will be paid in September.

Federal ANMF is working to clarify issues, around whether the payments will apply to casual and agency staff, with Aged Care Minister Richard Colbeck and his department.

ANMF also seeking clarification from Senator Colbeck about personal protective equipment and the funding for the mandatory flu vaccine arrangements. Read the Federal ANMF email [t.co/pycp7N1pf9](mailto:t.co/pycp7N1pf9)

## Infection control education for personal care workers

The Federal Department of Health has developed an e-learning program, suitable for personal care workers in aged care, on infection control during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The training module, provided by Aspen Medical, covers the fundamentals of infection prevention and control for COVID-19 including:

- COVID-19 – what is it?
- Signs and symptoms
- Keeping safe – protecting yourself and others
- Myth busting.

Users must register, but registration is open to anyone via [bit.ly/3e1o8gR](https://bit.ly/3e1o8gR)

## NMBA relaxes CPD requirements in lead up to registration renewal

All nurses and midwives need to renew their registration before 31 May.

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) has confirmed on its website that it encourages nurses and midwives to answer all renewal questions honestly and accurately. The NMBA says it understands some nurses and midwives 'may have trouble meeting the CPD requirements during this challenging time'.

The NMBA says the following may contribute to CPD hours:

1. attending COVID-19 in-services
2. reading and reflecting on COVID-19 journal articles
3. COVID-19 infection control training and online modules.

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The NMBA has confirmed it will not take action if a nurse and/or midwife declares they could not meet their CPD hours for the 2019-20 registration period. However, CPD evidence may be requested for those who declare they are unable to meet the recency of practice registration standard.

For more NMBA COVID-19 guidance visit [bit.ly/2JEU9Cn](https://bit.ly/2JEU9Cn)

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

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](https://anmfvic.asn.au/cam-1)

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 2 - Airway management and unconsciousness

[anmfvic.asn.au/cam-2](https://anmfvic.asn.au/cam-2)

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 3 - Respiratory Failure

[anmfvic.asn.au/cam-3](https://anmfvic.asn.au/cam-3)

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 4 – Oxygen Therapy

[anmfvic.asn.au/cam-4](https://anmfvic.asn.au/cam-4)

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 5 – Hypotension

<https://www.anmfvic.asn.au/cam-5>

ANMF Clinical Assessment Module 6 - Sepsis

<https://www.anmfvic.asn.au/cam-6>

There's no need to worry if you have already used your ANMF (Vic Branch) CPD Portal \$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 to assist you.

To access the new online clinical assessment modules, visit [cpd.anmfvic.asn.au](https://cpd.anmfvic.asn.au) or the links above, click on the CPD Portal member login and you will see your additional credit. If you've never logged in, choose 'forgot password'.

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 login or create an account.

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

## **ANMF regular publications suspended**

ANMF has suspended its regular publication schedule including *e-news* and *On the Record* to enable the Branch to focus on providing members with regular COVID-19 newsflashes. If you were not receiving these publications please re-subscribe ([anmfvic.asn.au/resubscribe](https://anmfvic.asn.au/resubscribe)) so that you don't miss out on our COVID-19 information.

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## ANMF (Vic Branch) Education Centre moves courses to a virtual classroom

The ANMF (Vic Branch) Education Centre has quickly adapted to the challenge of delivering CPD workshops and seminars during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Seminars and workshops now being delivered online using Zoom video communications are:

- **Recognising & responding to clinical deterioration** – 15 April
- **Advanced clinical assessment of the critically unwell person** (ACAMCU) – 16 & 17 April
- **Safe medication administration** – 22 & 29 April
- **Delirium, depression, dementia: distinguishing the dreaded Ds** – 29 April
- **ECG – cardiac rhythm recognition & 12 lead ECG**
- **Advanced 12-lead ECG** – 13 May
- **Law & ethics for mental health nurses** – 25 & 26 May
- **Elder abuse: invisible scars** – 27 May
- **Law & ethics for midwives, registered and enrolled nurses** – 10 & 11 June
- **Asthma management – a holistic approach** – 17 June
- **Mental health first aid: two day workshop for nurses & midwives** – 12 & 26 June
- **Mental health first aid for nurses and personal care workers in aged care** – 19 June
- **Supporting midwives to manage women's mental health issues during pregnancy and motherhood** – 24 June
- **Pain and the older person: partnership precedes prescription** – 24 June

To find links to register for these courses visit [anmfvic.asn.au/virtualclassroom](https://anmfvic.asn.au/virtualclassroom)

We will keep you updated about workshops and seminars scheduled for dates beyond 30 June.

The ANMF (Vic Branch) is also offering a two-day in-person course for nurses wanting to refresh their skills in the acute sector via [anmfvic.asn.au/reorientation](https://anmfvic.asn.au/reorientation)

## Canceling annual leave

In the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services *Guidance note on employment matters*, released on 30 March, the department has advised employers to be flexible in accommodating requests to cancel leave. You can read the DHHS *Guidance note on employment matters* via [bit.ly/2UhDSU2](https://bit.ly/2UhDSU2)

The department says exceptions may occur where the employee has an excess annual leave balance or where recruitment has occurred to cover an employee while they take leave. Please refer to your relevant enterprise agreement clause for further guidance on this issue.

The ANMF has advocated to private sector employers to adopt the department's guidelines around employment matters during the COVID-19 epidemic.

COVID-19  
IMPORTANT  
INFORMATION

for nurses, midwives and carers about coronavirus  
[anmfvic.asn.au/covid-19](https://anmfvic.asn.au/covid-19)



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