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Victorian Allied Health Professionals Association (VAHPA)

Allied Health Professionals say NO to reducing mandatory isolation requirements!

The Victorian Allied Health Professionals Association is calling on Premier Daniel Andrews to support Allied Health Professionals by rejecting any reduction in the 7-day isolation requirement for people who test positive to COVID-19. A decision on the length of the isolation period has been flagged for the National Cabinet meeting on Wednesday 31 August with the possibility of a reduction from 7 to 5 days on the table.

It is well established that people can still be highly infectious well beyond 5 days so any reduction from the current 7-day mandatory isolation requirement will likely increase the spread of COVID-19. While numbers of infections for the current wave are falling, the pressure is still on the health system, and it is widely accepted that another wave is expected within a few months.

Allied Health Professionals have had no respite for two and a half years and fear a further reduction in public health mitigations will add to their burden when many of them are at breaking point.

We know that there have been high levels of COVID-19 spread in workplaces and despite improved access to PPE, health facilities are not immune to this. Allied Health Professionals have been suffering high levels of workforce shortages due to the impacts of Covid. Hospitals are still seeing record demand with no sign of when that will end.

VAHPA calls on the Victorian Premier to not support any reduction to mandatory isolation requirements at National Cabinet. The risks of increasing community and workplace spread of COVID-19 by such a reduction will further exacerbate the unsustainable pressure on the already over-stretched, under-resourced and burnt-out Allied Health Professional workforce.

Quotes attributable to Andrew Hewat, Executive Officer VAHPA M: 0427 673 205

“Our members are telling us they are tired and have had enough. They need some relief and the best way to do that is to reduce community transmission to take the pressure off the health system. Reducing isolation requirements flies in the face of the science and VAHPA does not support this.”

“Allied Health Professionals are frontline health workers who have borne the brunt of so much during the pandemic so far. They know that it’s not over, and they want the government and community to accept that and keep working towards reducing pressure on the health system.”

“We have seen that when mitigations are left to the public’s discretion, they simply don’t happen. We are still deep in this pandemic, so we need a public health response that includes 7-day isolation requirements.”

“Mandatory isolation has been an important and effective tool to reduce the risk of people returning to work or circulating in the community while they are likely still infectious. Reducing, or worse removing isolation requirements flies in the face of a good public health mitigation strategy.”