VAHPA Statement on the end of Covid Isolation Mandate

The Victorian Allied Health Professionals Association expresses serious concerns at the cessation of mandatory isolation for people testing positive to COVID-19. On 30 August 2022, VAHPA released a statement calling on Premier Daniel Andrews to reject any reduction of the isolation period but on 31 August, National Cabinet reduced the mandatory isolation period from 7 to 5 days. On 30 September, National Cabinet went a step further and completely abandoned the mandatory isolation period for the general public.

Despite relatively low numbers of community cases and Covid hospitalisations, the emergence of new variants in the UK and Europe highlights the risk of the next wave of infections as immune evasive variants of concern gather momentum across the globe. The Victorian Government's own modelling shows the next wave is likely to hit this summer. With public health mitigations scrapped, VAHPA fears for the likely impact on hospitals over Christmas.

After three years of unrelenting pressure and workloads, allied health professionals feel betrayed by this National Cabinet decision. Following the reduction in isolation from 7 to 5 days and abandonment of mask mandates, the lagging vaccination rates in the community, the waning vaccine immunity for healthcare workers, the downgrading of PPE levels in some hospitals, the end of isolation payments, the flagging efficacy of RATs and reducing access to PCRs, are all setting us up for an overwhelming summer wave of Covid infections. VAHPA has called on the State Government to mainitain high levels of PPE access in health settings to protect allied health professionals.

"National Cabinet is making public health decisions that are not based on precautionary health principles or supported by the science but appear to be based in misguided economic aspirations. At the end of the day, it's the healthcare workers who have to carry the can for the government's folly," said VAHPA Executive Officer, Andrew Hewat.

"We have seen thousands of healthcare workers get infected by Covid at work over the pandemic. These hospital acquired infections get worse when community cases are high and the workload pressures escalate. The best way to protect our precious health workforce is to suppress transmission in the community and to reduce hospitalisations. If we don't we will burn out our staff and the burden of Long Covid will haunt us for years."

3 October 2022

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