



MEDIA RELEASE

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CATHOLIC PRIVATE HOSPITALS CALL FOR BLANKET RULE FOR HOSPITAL STAFF TO GET VACCINATED

Catholic not-for-profit hospitals are calling on National Cabinet to make vaccinations compulsory for all hospital staff across Australia and a roll out plan to ensure every worker has a date in their diary to get inoculated.

Currently it is not mandatory for health care workers to get vaccinated against COVID.

The peak body representing Catholic not-for-profit hospitals, Catholic Health Australia (CHA), says its members are already redeploying unvaccinated staff to clinical areas where there is a lower risk of contact with COVID patients and vaccinating staff as and when Commonwealth supplies become available.

But it says a uniform rule to get the COVID vaccine should be in place for hospital staff - regardless of whether they work in ED, ICU or any other clinical or support position.

CHA's Health Policy Director James Kemp said: "Every year health care staff are required to get vaccinated against the flu and yet there's no such directive for COVID.

"The high transmissibility of the Delta variant of COVID is putting workers and the people they care for at greater risk as well as putting extra strain on staff. We need a single, uniform rule across Australia for everyone working in a hospital environment."

CHA's call comes as France joins a growing list of countries mandating vaccinations for its health care workforce.

The Commonwealth Government already requires all residential aged care staff to be vaccinated by mid-September and has put in place a package of measures such as paid leave for casual staff or a \$80 flat fee for staff who must go off site. CHA says National Cabinet should put in place a similar scheme for all hospital staff across Australia, public and private.

Mr Kemp said: "Every worker should have a date in their diary to get vaccinated. Every dose that comes into the country should have a hospital workers' name next to it."

Note to editors: Catholic Health Australia (CHA) is Australia's largest non-government grouping of health and aged care services accounting for approximately 10 percent of hospital-based healthcare in Australia. Our members also provide around 25 percent of private hospital care, 5 percent of public hospital care, 12 percent of aged care facilities, and 20 percent of home care and support for the elderly.